

THE TRUE
Meaning & Consequences
OF A
POSITION

Of the Right Reverend the
LORD BISHOP of BANGOR
CONCERNING
SINCERITY,
ASSERTED,

Against his LORDSHIP's general Charge
of Misunderstanding, and the particular Ex-
ceptions of the Reverend Mr. PYLE.

Wherein is shewn,
That this Writer, instead of justifying his
LORDSHIP against the Committee, hath given
him up in every Particular.

WITH A
PREFACE,

Shewing by very plain Arguments, that his
LORDSHIP's Intention in writing his PRE-
SERVATIVE and SERMON, was to make way for
INDEPENDENCY.

By HENRY STEBBING, M. A.
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Fellow of St. Catharines-Hall in Cambridge.*

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Cont. of "Account"

THE TRUE
Meaning & Confession
OF A
POSITION

Of the Right Reverend the
Lord Bishop of BANGOR
CONCERNING
SINCE

AGAINST the Lord Bishop's general Charge
of Misunderstanding, and the
expressions of the Right Reverend Mr. Bishop
That this Writer, instead of
Losing sight of the Commandment, and
himself in every Particular

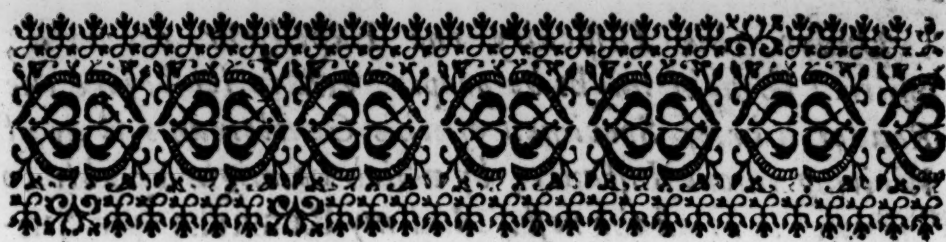
WITH A
PREFACE

Shewing by very plain Arguments
That the Lord Bishop's Charge is
unjust and untrue, and to which
INDICATIONS

By the Author, STEPHEN C. M. A.
Bishop of the Diocese of Bangor, and
Fellow of the Cathedral School, Bangor

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THE PREFACE.

THE following Sheets being entirely spent in the Proof of the most plain and obvious Things; it must be wholly owing to the good Nature of my Reader if they meet with a kind Reception. I was from the very beginning conscious to my self how much the answering Mr. Pyle would want an Apology; and even now I cannot see what Apology would be sufficient, should I trace him minutely thro' all his Objections, which (so far at least as they relate to the Points between his Lordship and the Committee) appear at first Sight to be purely the Effects of his own Uneasiness under Conviction, and his resolute Attachment to a desperate and indefensible Cause. Yet on the other hand to take no notice of any of them, I thought would be laying my self open to the Censure of his Lordship and his Friends; whilst some perhaps would have look'd upon it as a silent Acknowledgment that I could not reply; and others as an Instance of an indecent Contempt, that I would not reply to one, whose former Writings in this Controversy (if I mistake not) stand in the Catalogue of those whom even his Lordship himself has thought fit to appeal to, as (a) excellent Answers, and as coming from some of the ablest Hands that he knows of.

(a) *Answ.* to a late Book written by Dr. Sherlock, p. 111.

Under this Difficulty one Expedient occur'd, which I thought might be proper, viz. to set before the Reader a brief Specimen of this Gentleman's Way of Writing in one Instance, by which he might be able to judge of it in all the rest. And my Remarks upon Sincerity being the shortest of all my Tracts, as a Defence of it might be managed at the smallest Expence, so I hoped that I should hereby entitle my self to so much Candor from the Publick, as not to have it thought, that if I pass by the other (as I fully purpose to do) it is because I have nothing to say; and that I should meet with so much Justice, as to have it acknowledged, that I am none of those who disdain every thing but what comes directly from his Lordship's own Hand. For my own part, as I am not a Principal in the Controversy now on foot, nor can presume to think my self of the Number of those Persons of Weight, whose Objections his Lordship hath somewhere promised to reply to at a convenient Season; so I cannot expect that his Lordship should ever particularly take notice of any thing that has been written by me. Nor indeed do I desire it; for I am not so unacquainted either with my own, or with his Lordship's Abilities, as not to be sensible how much the Truth may be in danger of suffering, if once her Cause should come to be tried upon so unequal a Foot. But tho' I may not expect to hear from his Lordship, yet surely I may hope that those who disapprove of my Writings, will either be wholly silent, or else that they will shew the Reasons of their Dislike in such a manner as is some way consistent with Decency and good Sense; and such Adversaries I shall never overlook, let them be who they will. But when Men write for no other Purpose than to vent their Passions, and rather than say nothing, are resolved to say any thing; their Answers are Answers to themselves, and not to me: So that if his Lordship should once more think fit to set forth Mr. Pyle as an able Writer, recommend his Answers to my Books

The P R E F A C E.

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as excellent Answers, and expect that I should be at leisure to attend upon him as often as he shall be disposed to call upon me, tho' I shall pay all that Deference to his Lordship's Judgment which such a Case will admit of, yet (unless he very much mends his Hand) I shall think my self obliged to have so much Regard to my self, and to the Publick, as only to assure his Lordship that I can employ my Time to a better Purpose.

But I fancy that by this time his Lordship himself is pretty well convinced, that it would be for his Interest would this Gentleman leave his Defence to others, and try to serve him in a properer Way. For 'tis plain that the Service he hath hitherto done hath been, not to his Lordship, but to the Committee, of whose Censure there will be no room to complain, if that be his Lordship's Meaning, which Mr. Pyle has every where granted as such. How true this is with respect to the Point of Sincerity, I have shewn at large in the ensuing Sheets; and how true it is likewise with respect to the main Point in debate, viz. the Point of Church Authority, it will be no hard matter to guess, from what I shall presently observe to the Reader. 'Tis perfectly needless to examine particularly what Mr. Pyle hath objected to my Remarks upon that Head. His Observations are all of a piece with those which I have here brought to the Trial; and had that part of his Book appeared by it self, and without a Name, one might have judged by its Features to whom it belonged.

But there is one thing which, had Mr. Pyle's Observations been conceived under a more auspicious Planet, would have made it not at all necessary for me to consider them, which is, that his Lordship himself can, if he pleases, the most easily and effectually decide that Controversy. The Committee have charged him with denying ALL Authority to the Church. My Business was to shew that they had reason to do it. This I did by a particular Examination of those

Passages

Passages upon which the Charge of the Committee was grounded, which, according to the plain and obvious Sense of the Words, I have made appear to imply, that the Church hath NO Authority. Now as the Meaning of the Committee was not merely to censure his Lordship's Words, but the Opinions or Doctrines signified by those Words, 'tis certain that had his Lordship declared plainly that the Church has Authority, and shewn what that Authority is, the Committee would have accepted of such a Declaration as an Answer to their Charge, so far as it should have come up to an Acknowledgment of that Authority, which in their Opinion ought to be claimed. For the Question had then been not concerning his Lordship's Opinion, but concerning his Words only; not whether the Bishop judged right, but whether he had spoken right; which if he had not, it could have been of no Force against his avowed Sense, nor would have afforded any just Ground for farther Censure. Now that which would have satisfied the Committee, ought also to satisfy me, and every Body else. And therefore I have declared in the Close of my Remarks, that if his Lordship will say that the Church HAS AUTHORITY; that there is a Power in some over others to prescribe Laws for Order and Decency in indifferent Matters in Religion, &c. I shall admit of his solemn Declaration against every thing that I have said; i. e. I shall so far admit of it, as to think my self obliged not to enter into any farther Dispute with him upon this Matter. For as the reason why the Committee charged his Lordship with denying this Authority, was because they thought it to be his Opinion that there is no such Authority; so the reason of my defending that Charge, was because I thought so too. And therefore whenever the contrary shall appear, I shall think it will be far more decent in me to leave the World to judge, from what has already been offered, whether

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I had reason to think as I did, than to go about to justify my self anew; which indeed would be forsaking the Substance to hunt after the Shadow, and pestering the World with a Dispute of no manner of Use or Significancy.

But it seems, to expect that his Lordship should declare himself upon this Point, is a very unreasonable thing. (b) As if, says Mr. Pyle, it were HIS (the Bishop's) Duty to set out all or any Boundaries of Power which a Church HAS, in a Discourse professedly designed for nothing else but defending sincere Christians against those exorbitant Powers, which it manifestly has NOT! This was said in answer to the Dean of Chichester, who in his Preface to my Remarks had observed, (c) how carefully and resolutely his Lordship had avoided declaring what one Branch of Authority he allows to the Church, insisting nevertheless that he had not denied ALL; and hereupon had taken occasion to call upon him by all the Regard that is due to Truth, to Religion, to the Gospel, and to the Church of Christ, to say it without Disguise. To this Call of the Dean, I say, Mr. Pyle takes upon him to answer for the Bishop, in the Words just now set down; and he undertakes to justify this Answer by drawing Parallels more worthy of himself, than of his sacred Profession and Character. This (proceeds he) is just as if I should get an honest Man into my House, and attempt to rob him, and then upon his defending himself and getting away, I should indict him at the next Assizes for stealing all my Goods and Chattels. — Again, He (the Dean) has sued and cast me, suppose in a Matter of Encroachment upon Boundaries of Lands between us. Hence I conclude that he means to swallow ALL my Lands,

(b) Pref. to 3d Letter, p. 8, 9.

(c) p. 3.

and leave me not a Foot or Furrow. Whose Business is it now, whose Concern to look out for clear Titles, and to set out the several Abutments and Boundaries of my Lands? *How well skilled Mr. Pyle may be in the Methods of proceeding in Law, I cannot tell; but I am sorry he has no better Notion of that Gospel of which he is a Minister, than to think that in religious Controversies Men are to be governed by the same, and no other Rules, than those which they are bound to observe in their Disputes about the Abutments of Lands, and in adjusting Differences about Goods and Chattels. If one Man prosecutes another only upon a Suspicion of Wrong, the Law will allow him no Remedy; and the Defendant having no Concern as a Civil Subject but to clear himself by Law, 'tis enough if the Plaintiff can make no Proof of any real Damage. But what is all this to the Purpose? Was his Lordship concerned in this Case merely as a Civil Subject? Is he not to be considered as a Christian and a Bishop? And was it not his Duty under either of these Capacities, to have endeavoured by all possible means to take away that Scandal, which, by his seeming at least to deny all Authority to the Church, he had given to Multitudes of Men, if he had in earnest believed that the Church has any Authority? I may presume to ask this Question now, because I have once before asked it in vain; and if Mr. Pyle be at a loss what Answer to give to it, let him go to the Gospel and learn what that means, It is impossible but that Offences will come, but wo unto him thro' whom they come; or that of the Apostle, Let no Man put a Stumbling-block or an Occasion of Falling in his Brother's Way.*

Mr. Pyle may be pleased to put the Case in another Instance, and try whether his Divinity will not help him to a truer Sight of it than his Law. We will suppose that some Man or other, eminent for his Learning

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ing and Judgment, had given it out, that there is no Sin in Swearing, and that Numbers of others should have been led to think that any sort of Swearing is lawful, and accordingly should have begun to allow themselves the Liberty of Swearing, some falsely, some rashly and vainly. I put it to Mr. Pyle as a Casuist, what would be an honest Man's Duty in this Case? Would it be allowable in him to sit down and say nothing? Or would it be enough for him to put it to his Adversaries, to shew that such Inferences could justly be drawn from his Assertion? Ought he not rather, in the most speedy and publick manner possible, to testify his Abhorrence of these wicked Profanations, and (to prevent such Abuses for the future) to set forth particularly those Cases in which only he meant to say that it was lawful to Swear? I am persuaded that there is no one, who has any Regard to the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Mens Souls, who will not think this Method to be just and reasonable. And is it then nothing to God's Honour, nothing to Mens Salvation, whether that Authority which Christ hath reposed in the Hands of his Ministers, be acknowledged and obeyed or not? Let Mr. Pyle either shew this, or else let him shew us a good reason why the Bishop, by whose late Writings it is but too visible that great Numbers have been led openly to insult and trample upon this Authority, should be exempted from the common Rules of Christianity (I may add, and of Humanity too) in like Cases.

There will be little need to observe to my Reader, that the Argument goes all along upon the Supposition, that the Bishop does allow that there is such an Authority; for if there be in his Opinion no such Authority, then in his Opinion there will be no Scandal given by leading others to think that there is no such Authority, and therefore no Scandal to be removed. I have said thus much purely because Mr. Pyle has forced me to it, by insisting upon it so positively

tively against Dr. Sherlock, who had called upon his Lordship to declare himself, (d) that he is not now obliged to do it by virtue of the Part he has hitherto acted in the present Controversy, altho' the Design of his whole Book is to shew that his Lordship hath not denied all Authority, but (e) such Authority only as is destructive of all real Religion and genuine Christianity. Against all such Authority as this I may venture to say, that we are as hearty Enemies as his Lordship, or the most zealous of his Friends. But this is not the Point: That which now lies before us is, Whether supposing that his Lordship allows of some Authority in the Church, he is not in Conscience obliged to set forth what that Authority is, in order to remove the Scandal which he has given to a great many, who have concluded from his Writings that he allows of no Authority. In proving that he is not, Mr. Pyle has put his Readers to the Expence of near Six Pages of Preface, the main Support of which has already been laid before you; the rest is fraught with such a Variety of groundless Conceits, and wicked Insinuations, as is hardly to be met with among any of the weakest and most profligate Writers of the Age. Having settled the Case of a Charge of THEFT falsely suggested, and that of a supposed Design of INCROACHMENT upon Lands, and determined what is to be expected from either Party, with the Gravity of a Judge in Westminster-Hall; at p. 10. he begins to grow merry; and considers how diverting it must be to the rest of Mankind, to see a Set of Men thus eagerly fencing and disputing about a certain Privilege and Authority, and yet all the while avoiding and shifting it upon each other to define what it is, and in whom it is lodged. At p. 12. he lets HIMSELF into the very Cause why the Dean

(d) Ibid. p. 13.

(e) Fourth Letter, p. 43, 44.

and some others are so loath to have any hand in it, and why they so pathetically insist upon his Lordship's performing this Part, *viz.* because there may be great Hopes that HIS (*i. e.* the Bishop's) Openness, Sincerity, Plainness, and Undisguisedness, might happily bring THAT upon him, which would finish the Dispute in favour of his Adversaries, sooner and better than all the Reasons they can give, or the Pens they can ever employ against him. *The That which stands here in Capitals refers to Temporal or Spiritual Authority, mentioned in the next Paragraph; so that according to Mr. Pyle the very Reason why his Lordship is called upon to declare what Authority he owns, is because it is hoped that such a Declaration would bring upon him the Censures of the Church (and perhaps the Secular Power too) as what will decide the Controversy much better against him, than Reason and Argument. One might be excused if he should infer from hence, that in Mr. Pyle's own Opinion the Bishop has such Notions concerning the Authority of the Church, as, if he would plainly speak them out, would subject him to Ecclesiastical Censure; which gives a fine Idea of our Ecclesiastical Laws, when 'tis remembred that the Bishop denies no Authority, but such Authority as is destructive of all real Religion and genuine Christianity. To exclaim against all such Censures in the gross, he learn'd from the Bishop himself; and whoever does it, 'tis a Symptom which to me as surely indicates an inward Disposition to innovate in the Church, as a Man's calling out to have all Civil Courts of Judicature abolished, would shew his Intention to overturn the State. But let this be as it will, thus much is plain, that those, whoever they be, who either have called, or shall hereafter call upon his Lordship to explain himself, are represented as Persons conscious to themselves that their Cause cannot be maintained upon the Foot of Reason, and yet res-*

ved, if they can, to support it merely by the Dint of Authority. *A few Lines after their Character is compleated, and they are declared to be Adversaries, whose Hopes are the same with those of the Jews, in their captious Questions put to our Saviour, that upon either side of the Determination there might be Stones enough ready to cast at him. This is a fine Comparison ! But the Calumny is too gross to be supported by so weak and slender a Foundation. To call upon his Lordship to tell us what Authority he owns, and what he denies, is highly reasonable, if it were only upon this Account, viz. that we may no longer continue fighting in the Dark, without knowing what it is necessary for us to prove. The Authority claimed by us is, as we judge, the very same with, and no other than, that which our Church has claimed ever since the Reformation. His Lordship cannot be ignorant of these Claims ; and therefore if he knows of any in which he thinks either that we have departed from our Church, or our Church from the Scriptures, let him shew which they are, and he shall have a fair hearing. But till this is done, to expect that we should undertake to defend any particular Claim against his Lordship, is ridiculous ; because whatever Claim we fix upon, his Lordship, when all is done, may tell us that he never opposed this Claim, and so it must be left entirely to his Lordship's Discretion to determine to the World, whether we have not been very impertinent. How far this would be our Case if we should go about to defend all our Claims, it is impossible to say with any manner of Certainty ; for his Lordship by declaring that he hath not denied all Authority, and yet refusing to tell us what Authority he owns, has left himself at Liberty to own just as much or as little as he shall think fit ; so that if we should make good every thing which we pretend to (for we do not pretend to all Authority) we cannot be certain but that his Lordship may make use of his Liberty otherwise than*

than we expect, and declare for it too; the true Consequence of which is, that the more able we are to defend and justify our selves, the more danger we are in of saying a great deal to very little Purpose. Whether this be putting things upon a fair Bottom, let any one judge. To me this Cautious Way of Dealing seems to betray much more of Craft and Policy, than of true Courage. 'Tis just as if I should use all the Means I could to provoke a Man to Fight me, and when I find him ready, should sneak off, and leave him to try his Strength upon some Body else, that so I might the better know whether I am able to Encounter him. Whether this be his Lordship's Case, he himself best knows, but I cannot forbear saying it looks somewhat like it. In writing his Preservative and Sermon, he was thought by all the Friends of the Established Church to have proclaimed open War against her; and his drawing back so soon after the Alarm was taken, and pretending that he was only Arguing against the Papists, and I know not who, seems to have been only an Umbrage to shift the Cause into other Hands; that so he might secure to himself the Benefit of a Retreat, in case the Success should not answer his Expectation. If this be so, it will then be the Concern of his Friends to call upon him to declare; by whom he has not dealt so kindly as they deserve, if after having put his Hand to the Plough, which is to tear up the Foundations of our Establishment, he looks back and leaves them to bear the heat and burden of the day. But if not, and his Lordship shall still insist upon his old Plea, that he has not denied all Authority, it behoves us, I think, to call upon him, not as Mr. Pyle weakly supposes, to deliver us out the Particulars of our Authority (for we want not to be instructed in what we pretend to) but deliver out to us the Particulars of his own, i. e. of that which he will

will stand by ; and if it shall appear to us to be less than what we think may be claimed by the Gospel, it will soon be seen whether we will shift off the Cause from one to the other, as if it were too hot to be meddled with, or whether it may be better supported by mere Authority, and Human Engines, than by the solid and lasting Foundations of Judgment and Reason.

But if his Lordship will not be prevailed upon to declare himself for our sakes, he ought certainly to do it for the sake of others, even Multitudes of Men to whom he has done infinite Wrong, if there be any one Branch of Authority which he allows to the Church. The thing is too plain to be denied, and I doubt not but his Lordship sees it as well as I. I could indeed have no good Opinion of his Lordship, had I no other way of finding out his Character, than from Mr. Pyle's Writings : But even he, with all his Indiscretion, shall never provoke me to think that this Right Reverend Prelate is either so weak a Man as not to know, or so bad a Man as not to consider, that the Ministring to others an Occasion of departing from the Faith of the Gospel, is a thing of which some account will be required another Day. To do it with Design, is one of the highest Affronts we can offer to God ; and what is undesignedly done, becomes designed, if afterward we do not endeavour, to the utmost of our Power, to repair the Injury. And what then can be expected from his Lordship, whose fertile Labours have so plentifully Administred to the growth of Libertinism among us, and produced so many rude Attacks upon the Church and Clergy ; what less, I say, can be expected from him, than that he himself should with his own Hands apply a Remedy to these Evils, by asserting those Rightful Powers (whatever they be) which chiefly thro' his Means have been set at nought ? That so his Lordship's Great Name and Character may not hencefor-

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ward be made to Patronize those very Opinions which he himself disallows of; that the Enemies of our Church may no longer claim him as their own; nor Deists and Free-Thinkers continue to Caress and Compliment him in vain.

If Mr. Pyle can shew that there is nothing in all this, he is at full liberty to do it, and then, and not before, he may perhaps be able to calumniate those, who shall call upon his Lordship to explain himself, with a better Grace. But as for his Lordship, I will not, I cannot mistrust him so far as to think he will attempt it. He knows himself to be a Debtor to the Wise, and to the Unwise, and to have to do, (tho' Mr. Pyle (f) seems to imagine that none but the Committee have) with the Brethren at large, the Weak as well as the Strong. He knows full well what Influence the Eminency of his Station, and the Credit and Reputation he has obtained in the World, has in determining the Sentiments of others agreeably to his own; and upon this account must think himself bound by the Regard he owes to that Gospel, of which he is an Ambassador, to that Church of which he is a Bishop, and to all those Christians who have been Witnesses of his Conduct in this Particular, if indeed he does own any Authority, to declare plainly what it is. Of all these things, I say, I make no doubt but that his Lordship is truly sensible; and therefore his studied Reservedness in this Case ever was, and ever will be a strong Argument with me, that the Charge of the Committee is not to be Refuted. I omit to mention those Reasons, which in Point of Prudence might move his Lordship to such a Declaration. Of his own Private Affairs he himself must be allowed to be the best Judge; tho'

(f) Fourth Letter, p. 83.

I should hope that no Private Views would so far have prevailed over him, as to lead him to the Neglect of so Publick and so Necessary a Duty. But there is one thing which I must not forget to mention, viz. His Lordship's great Tenderness of his own Character, which of late has appeared in a very remarkable Instance. It is not long since his Lordship was charged with having Prevaricated in a most Solemn Appeal to Almighty God. A heavy, and (as I believe) a very groundless Imputation it was; and his Lordship, as it behoved him, left no Stone unturned to remove it. But to leave this Point to be decided in Books, was not thought safe; the Remedy might be too slow for the Disease; and therefore Advertisements thronged upon Advertisements, and every News Paper groaned under the Burden of the Controversy. How adviseable this Method was, I shall not take upon me to determine; but this I say, that when I consider his Lordship's Zeal in the one Case, and his Coldness in the other, I cannot in Charity so much as suspect that he owns any Authority. For if I did, the Inference would force it self too strongly upon me, viz. That his Lordship has a much greater Concern for his own Honour, than he has for the Honour of his Lord and Master.

The Reader I hope will forgive me, that I have detained him so long upon this Point, when he considers that I am all this while endeavouring to show, that there is at present no necessity for me to enter upon a particular Defence of my First Treatise. I shall now offer one Argument more, which tho' I dare not call a Demonstration in the strict Sense of the Word, yet, I may venture to say, is sufficient to satisfy any reasonable Man, that it never will be necessary. I do assure his Lordship, and the World, that I speak it with no manner of Delight, or Complacency, but with the deepest Concern; for I rate
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not the Peace of the Church so low in my Esteem, nor am so little sensible how much it may be in his Lordship's Power to disturb it, that I had not infinitely rather find my self mistaken with the Committee in judging of his Lordship's Sense, than find him mistaken in a Matter of such Consequence as this. But if any Regard is to be paid to what the Writers of his Lordship's Side have openly and constantly maintained, it will appear, that whenever his Lordship shall declare himself (if he shall at any time think fit to declare himself) it will be abundantly to our Justification; there being not so much as one of these (so far as I have seen) who has not denied all Authority in the Church in as full Terms as possible; and advanced such (I will not say new Schemes; for indeed they are only the old independent Notions revived; but such Schemes) as are utterly inconsistent with all Order and Government. To set this Matter in a clear Light may not be improper, in order to close up this Controversy, which has now been almost Two Years on foot, concerning the true Intent and Meaning of the Bishop's Sermon: I shall dispatch it as briefly as I can.

It is to be observed then, that when we say the Church has Authority, our Meaning is, that there are certain particular Persons in the Church who are vested with Authority from Christ. This Authority is supposed to be both Legislative and Judicial. Legislative, as these Persons are authorized to make Appointments about indifferent Matters relating to Order and Decency in Religion and the Worship of God; which Appointments, under proper Circumstances, shall be binding upon the Consciences of others. And Judicial, as they are empowered to determine upon what Terms and Conditions Men shall be admitted to, or excluded from, external and visible Communion. Who those

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Persons are who are entrusted with this Authority, it is not at present needful to enquire; tho' 'tis very obvious to gather, and it has been generally so understood, that if there be such an Authority, it must originally have been lodged in the Hands of the Clergy. But this can be no Part of the Question with those who deny that there is any such Authority any where at all; and that this is the Case of those who have appeared in Defence of the Bishop of Bangor, I am now to shew. I shall confine my Enquiries to the first Branch of Authority only, viz. the Authority of Legislation; for when this is once destroyed, the other must fall of course.

The Reader perhaps will be surprized to see Mr. Pyle standing at the Head of those who have denied all Authority, if he considers in how angry a manner he has treated me, for endeavouring to shew that the Bishop has denied all Authority. But when he grows to be a little acquainted with him, he will learn to wonder at nothing of this Kind; for he will find it to be his constant Practice, under the Pretence of writing for the Bishop, to write against the Bishop and himself too. A few plain Passages out of his fourth Letter will set this Point out of the way of Exception.

(g) We say then (says he) that the Church (mean by it what you will) needs not at all be supposed to derive its Authority of appointing indifferent Things from any express CHARTER or DELEGATION from Christ — we find no such determinate COMMISSION or Privilege DELEGATED to the Church, nor was there occasion for it. Here is a plain Declaration that Christ has given no special Commission to the Church to ap-

point indifferent Things ; now if this be true, then he can have given no special Commission to any particular Persons in the Church. This is granted in express Terms. (b) The chief Texts, says he, whereon is pretended to be built an express COMMISSION from Christ to PARTICULAR PERSONS as CHURCH GOVERNOURS, have been considered by the Bishop and his Advocates, and shewn to have no relation to such Kind of Power, &c. And therefore he declares a few Lines after, that the reason of our OBEYING such (*for so he speaks, tho' very improperly*) is not because of any express CHARTER given them BY CHRIST, as RELIGIOUS OF SPIRITUAL GOVERNOURS, to make Appointments in indifferent Matters. Again, (i) The chief Mistake lies in imagining that Mens Obedience is due to it (i. e. to a Church Law) by virtue of a positive COMMISSION given by Christ to CERTAIN MEN as SPIRITUAL RULERS. And (k) elsewhere speaking of Spiritual Powers by DERIVATION from Christ to certain PARTICULAR PERSONS, he says they are DREAMS. The Author of a Pamphlet under the Name of Phileleutherus Cantabrigiensis, treads in the same Path. (l) It does not (*says he*) any where appear that God has given the Power of making Laws or Rules about the Circumstances of his Worship and Service, to any PARTICULAR PERSONS among Christians: therefore no Persons have a DIVINE RIGHT to this Power. And this Notion is also supported by Mr. Burnet, who says of the Clergy in particular, that (m) they are appointed ONLY TO TEACH, TO EXHORT, and to ASSIST others in the

(b) p. 67. (i) p. 69. (k) p. 88. (l) Essay on imposing Articles, p. 7. (m) Second Letter to Mr. Law, p. 108, 302.

Performance of their Duties. *That they have properly any Authority he (n) denies; for this, says he, implies Command and Dominion, which St. Peter expressly forbids Pastors to exercise. And he says of all Christians, without Exception, that they (o) are all equal, and upon a foot; and that none of them (p) have a Power of making Laws, so as to bind the Consciences of others.*

It appears then from what these Gentlemen do unanimously teach, that there are no particular Persons in the Church to whom Christ has granted a Power or Commission to make Laws for Order and Decency; the Consequence of which is manifestly this, that there is in the Church no Legislative Authority. For a Legislative Authority implying, in the very Notion of it, a Power of making Laws, which, under proper Circumstances, shall be obligatory upon others (for otherwise they are no Laws) 'tis plain, that if there be any such Authority in the Church, it must be lodged in the Hands of some particular Persons in the Church. It is plain also that these particular Persons must have received this Authority by a Commission from Christ; because Christ being the Head and supreme Governour of the Church, whatever Authority there is in the Church, it must have been granted by or derived from him. But why do I labour to deduce that by way of Consequence, which these Gentlemen do so liberally grant me of their own accord? Mr. Burnet you see confesses the Charge, and tells us, that no fallible Men have a Power of making Laws in Christ's Kingdom, so as to bind the Consciences of his Subjects. Mr. Pyle goes farther a great deal; (q) There CANNOT (says he) IN THE NATURE OF THE THING be a proper Human

(n) Ibid. p. 154.

(o) Ibid. p. 55.

(p) Ibid. p. 263.

(q) Ibid. p. 71.

LEGISLATIVE Power at all, even in the EXTERNALS of Religion, as there is in Civil Affairs. *This surely is a Stretch beyond all Reason! For what? Could not Christ, if he had so pleased, have given a Power to some particular Persons to make Laws relating to the external Modes or Circumstances of Religion? Why no it seems; and the Reasons are, because there can be no Power to which the Subjects can be ABSOLUTELY and CONSTANTLY obliged, or which can rightly and really PUNISH for Non-compliance. Worthily argued! As if Punishment, i. e. Temporal Punishment, were of the Essence of a Law! Or as if Power must either be absolute or none at all! If this be true, it will as well follow that there can be no Human Legislative Power in Civil Affairs. For I know not where that Civil Power is, which can oblige the Subjects absolutely and constantly, or under all Circumstances.*

But it is not my Business at this time to dispute whether there be in the Church any proper legislative Authority, but only to enquire whether these Gentlemen do allow that there is; and it is, I think, as plain as Words can make it, that they do not. 'Tis true they very frequently use the Word Authority, and speak of Church Governours, Church Laws, and the like; but in this they only use a Latitude of Expression, which may serve to impose upon careless Readers; for when you come to examine precisely into their Notion of Authority, &c. it is manifest that they intend no such Matters as those Words and Phrases do properly imply. This will be more evident still, if you consider what Account they give of the Ground and Foundation of Church Communion, which, says my Author, Mr. Pyle, (r) is of an Human, Social, and Civil Nature. (s) The Church,

(r) Ibid. p. 66.

(s) Ibid. p. 65.

he tells us, cannot but be supposed to have an Authority of appointing indifferent Things, as it is a Society, and by virtue of its very Nature of being such; and therefore it is both impowered and obliged to keep up that Order and Regularity, which in the Course of Reason, Nature and Providence, is necessary to and obligatory upon all Societies. There are two or three Paragraphs more full of such Stuff as this; by which those who are well versed in Unintelligibles perhaps may receive some Edification. But those who love plain Words, I must desire to attend me to the next Chapter, where we shall find a Key which will let us into the whole Mystery. I had in my Remarks, p. 80. taken notice of the Bishop's way of interpreting the 20th Article of our Church, wherein it is declared that the Church hath Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies. His Lordship's Sense of the Matter is this; That since the Church (in the preceding Article) is defined to be a Congregation, &c. therefore whatever is here affirmed of the Church, must be supposed to be affirmed not of any particular Persons, but of the whole Congregation. Is not this (said I) taking away all Authority in some Christians above others to prescribe Laws for the external Manner of religious Worship? Why yes, says Mr. Pyle, (†) just as much as for any CIVIL Body of Men to agree upon Laws for preserving Society, would be taking away all Power of some over others; but no more. For neither the one nor the other, by supposing the Power of Law-making to be lodged originally in the WHOLE BODY, carries any Denial but that the Power of executing their Laws may be delegated to PARTICULAR HANDS. How much this Answer is to the Purpose,

(†) Ibid. p. 86.

will be seen anon ; thus much is plain at the very first Sight, that according to Mr. Pyle, Church Communion, i. e. the joining of many Persons together in one particular external Way or Manner of religious Worship, is founded not in any Power or Authority which is originally lodged in some above others of prescribing or appointing that Manner, but in the Consent or Agreement of the whole Body or Congregation so joining together ; which appears yet farther from what he says a little after, viz. (u) That when any CHURCH or SOCIETY of Christians HAVE APPOINTED Ceremonial Usages for the sake of common Decency in Worship, those Members, &c. Now as this is entirely agreeable to what the Bishop supposes to be the Sense of the Article, so it answers to the Notion which is constantly and unanimously maintained by the Writers aforementioned. Mr. Burnet perpetually speaks of the (w) Agreement of Christians, as the Foundation of external Order in the Church. Phileleutherus Cantabrigiensis tells us plainly, that (x) the ONLY Foundation or Right any Form of CHURCH POLITY can be settled upon, is the CONSENT and APPOINTMENT of THE CHRISTIANS who unite into that CHURCH ; and that CONSENT is the ONLY Foundation of ECCLESIASTICAL as well as of CIVIL Government. Once more then I ask the Question ; Is not this taking away all Authority in one Christian above another to prescribe Laws for the external Manner of religious Worship ; or, which is the same thing, can there upon this Supposition be any such thing in the Church as a proper LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY ? In answer to this Question, it is granted in the first place, that one Christian has not ori-

(u) Ibid. p. 88.

(w) Ibid. p. 131, 132, 133, 134.

(x) Ibid. p. 7, 8.

ginally a Power of prescribing Laws over others in these Cases; for Mr. Pyle tells us, that ORIGINALLY the Power of making, i. e. of appointing Rites and Ceremonies, is in the WHOLE BODY. Well; but may not the whole Body DELEGATE this Power into some particular Hands, whose Appointments about indifferent Things shall, in virtue of that DELEGATION, acquire the Nature and Force of Laws? If this may be, altho' the Difference will still be very great between us, yet it must be owned that there may be in the Church a proper LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY; and this is what Mr. Pyle seems to insinuate by his putting, in the way of Comparison, Ecclesiastical and Civil Societies upon the same Bottom. His Supposition is, that originally all Men are equal, as well with respect to their Religious as their Civil Concerns: and his Argument is to this effect; that to say that the Power of appointing Rites or Ceremonies for the Preservation of Order and Decency in religious Worship, is lodged originally in the whole Body, no more takes away all Authority in one CHRISTIAN above another, than to say that the Power of appointing Laws for the Preservation of Society is originally lodged in the whole Body, takes away all Authority of one CIVIL SUBJECT above another; because neither of these Suppositions carry with it any Denial, but that the Power—may be delegated to PARTICULAR HANDS. This seems manifestly designed to insinuate a Belief into his Readers, that there are some particular Persons in the Church who have a proper legislative Authority delegated to them from the whole Body, even as (according to these Mens Politicks at least) there are in the State; and certainly it was necessary for him to say this, or else, as is manifest, and as I suppose he himself saw, his Answer will have no relation to my Question. But it is evident also, that in Truth he intended to say no such thing; for when
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you come to look what that Power is which he pretends may be delegated from the whole Body, it is not what the Comparison would naturally lead you to expect, a Power of MAKING Laws, but a Power of EXECUTING Laws already made, i. e. it is not a legislative, but an executive Authority. What Chicanerie, what Legerdemain is this! It is not for SUCH Management, I hope, that Mr. Pyle has so decently complimented his Lordship with being the Author of a new Sect, and so frequently in his Writings stiled himself a BANGORIAN.

What this Power of executing Laws, when applied to the Church, can possibly mean, I shall not for my Part so much as pretend to conjecture. 'Tis enough for me that Mr. Pyle does not here say that the Body of Christians can delegate to any particular Hands a proper legislative Authority; and I am certain he cannot say this without contradicting what he has before advanced in general, viz. that there cannot in the nature of the thing be a proper Human legislative Power at all, even in the External of Religion, as there is in Civil Affairs. In truth, such a delegated Authority as this there cannot be in the Church without an exprefs Commission, or at least without an exprefs Permission from Christ; the reason is plain, viz. That tho' Men may give up their Natural and Temporal Rights into what Hands, and upon what Terms they please, yet they cannot give up their Religious and Spiritual. In the Use and Exercise of the former they are indebted to none; but in the Use and Exercise of the latter they are indebted to God. So that if it be supposed that Christ hath originally left all Persons at liberty to worship God in such a Way and Manner as they themselves shall best approve of, i. e. if he has not himself subjected them to any as Lawgivers, they cannot subject themselves to any as Lawgivers, without affronting him. Wherefore I say, in order to

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make way for a proper legislative Authority upon this foot, it must be shewn from Scripture that Christ hath permitted Christians to delegate that Power or Right, which originally is lodged in all of them equally, to particular Hands, and by them to be governed and directed as Lawgivers in Matters left undetermined by him; which should any one attempt to do, he would attempt something which is not only impossible, but very ridiculous. For it is upon many Accounts more reasonable to suppose, that if Christ had intended that Christians should be subject to particular Persons as Lawgivers in this Case, he himself would have appointed those Lawgivers, rather than have left them to appoint them for themselves — But there is no need for me to insist any longer upon this, which indeed is Nobodys Notion that I know of, but only a mere Suggestion of Mr. Pyle's, to get rid of an Objection which he could not answer. My Question was this, viz. Whether supposing that the Right of appointing Rites and Ceremonies was not lodged in the Hands of particular Persons in the Church, but in the whole Congregation, as the Bishop had asserted, it would not necessarily follow that there was no Authority in one Christian above another to appoint these Rites, and consequently no Authority in the Church at all. Mr. Pyle saw how this pinch'd, and found that the Objection could not be removed without saying, that tho' this Power was in the whole Body, yet it might be delegated by the whole Body to particular Hands. Now to have asserted this plainly, and without Disguise, would have been grossly to have contradicted his own declared Sense; and not to assert it, was clearly to give up the Point. This was worse than Death; and therefore he chose the middle way, i. e. to seem to assert it, and yet not to assert it; a Practice which is I confess worthy of such Writers as value the Credit of a Party more than they value the Truth;

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Truth; but can have its desired Effect only upon such Readers as trust to their Ears more than to their Understandings.

The Result of the whole is this; that according to these Men there is no such thing as any proper legislative Authority in the Church of Christ; but that all Christians are at liberty, notwithstanding any Pre-eminence or Superiority which Christ hath given to one above another (which they do not grant) to join together (any Number of them) in the use of such outward Forms of religious Worship as they themselves shall most approve of. I say, any Number of them; for if Consent be the only Foundation of Ecclesiastical Polity, as these Men expressly contend, it will follow, that if a Man does not consent to any particular Form of Ecclesiastical Polity, he cannot be bound to that Form, nor any longer bound than he is consenting; that is to say, he is perfectly at liberty (notwithstanding any Obligation which the Consent or Appointment of others can lay upon them) to join in that Form, or any other which he likes better. Men can consent only for themselves; and to say that the Consent of any Number of Christians in one Way of Worship, binds others to join in the same Way, is to plead for that legislative Authority which they disown. For whatever it be by which a Man is bound, that is a Law, and Authority will be Authority let it be lodged in the Hands of many, of a few, or of one. Wherefore, I say, when these Authors speak of Ecclesiastical Authority or Ecclesiastical Laws, they abuse the Words, and their Readers too. For by Authority they can mean only a Right or Power relating to themselves only; and by Laws they can intend nothing but certain Rules or Orders, which by the mutual Consent or Agreement of Christians have been settled among themselves. Mr. Burnet himself in effect confesses thus much. For

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says he (y) when any visible Church or Congregation of Christians have (NOT MADE a Christian LAW, for that they have NO POWER to do, but) AGREED upon any particular ORDER for their own Edification; it is then a Sin (not against any LAW made by that AGREEMENT, for SUCH there can be NONE properly speaking; but) against the great Law of Peace and Charity to leave that Order, without some very weighty Reasons. I shall make a farther Use of this Passage by and by; what I produce it for at this time is, to shew, that according to Mr. Burnet, the Orders or Appointments of Christians about the external Manner of religious Worship, are not properly Laws; and that the Obligation not to depart from any settled Order without good reason, arises not from hence, that Men are bound by that Order, but from the general Law of Peace and Charity; by which it is plain Men are oft-times bound, even in the most indifferent Matters.

And now I will beg Leave to ask his Lordship one plain Question. Will he stand by these Doctrines, or will he not? If he will not, why, in the Name of God, has he not long before now shewn his Dislike of them? Why has he not remonstrated against these either mistaken or designing Men, who have appeared under the Character of Interpreters and Defenders of his Writings, and told the World plainly that they have not represented his Meaning truly? But alas! his Lordship has given the World too much reason to think, that these Gentlemen have fathom'd to the very bottom of his Schemes; and that what they speak, they speak not of themselves; Mr. Burnet especially, whose Second Letter his Lordship hath (z) set forth in such a manner, that one cannot but

(y) Ibid. p. 131. (z) Answ. to Dr. Sherlock, p. 111.

suspect that he was no Stranger to the Contents of it before it was published. And if this be the Case, it might perhaps be worth his while to consider, how he will be able to justify his late Conduct to God, and to the World. For these are the very Doctrines which were charged upon him by the Committee; which Charge his Lordship hath not only denied, but hath taken occasion from hence to represent the Committee as Setters up of the Popish Claims of absolute Authority and indispensable Obedience; whereas it is plain to the Eyes of every one who is but willing to see, that the Charge carries no such Meaning, nor any other Meaning than that, in which his Lordship, if he would have spoke plainly, must have confessed the Justice of it. It would be easy for me, by the help of this Clue, which I have now put into the Reader's Hand, to lead him thro' all the Labyrinths of his Sermon, and his Answer to the Representation, and shew by what a Variety of artificial Turns he has endeavoured to perplex and confound his Readers. But as it was never any Part of my Design to render his Lordship odious, but only to justify those whom he had render'd so, I shall here stop my Hand, and leave the rest to those who are more fond of such Work than I am. I take no Delight in gazing upon the Frailties of my Brethren and Fellow Christians; and as to his Lordship, I do assure him I am so far from being desirous of saying any thing amiss of him, that I am for his sake, as well as for the sake of others, sorry that he has given me the occasion to say what I have said. If this therefore be (as I trust it is) enough for those whose just Cause I have been pleading, it shall be enough for me; nor shall I so far divest my self of my Humanity, nor shew my self so inconsistent in my Professions of a Concern for the Honour of our most excellent Church, as needlessly to expose those Faults of a Bishop of her own, which should her Enemies (as at some time or other perhaps

haps they may) cast in her Teeth, she must be forced to turn away her Face with no other Reply than this,

——— PUDET hæc opprobria nobis
Et DICI potuisse & non potuisse REFELLI.

One thing I have now to offer to those Gentlemen, whose Writings I have just been looking into; which I offer, not so much as an Argument against the Truth of their Principles (for it is not my Business at this time to decide that Point) but principally to lay open to them the full Extent of them, and shew that they infer a Conclusion, of which I believe they are not sensible, and of which when they are once made sensible, they may perhaps think it necessary to examine them over again. Mr. Burnet has told us in the Place last quoted, That when any visible Church or Congregation of Christians have ——— agreed upon any particular Order for their own Edification; it is then a Sin ——— against the great Law of Peace and Charity to leave that Order, and make other new ones, without very weighty Reasons. The Case you see relates to external Communion; and to avoid multiplying Questions, I shall suppose the meaning of the Passage to be this: That when the Christians of any Nation, or the major part of them, have agreed upon any particular Order, i. e. upon any particular Form of Ecclesiastical Polity, it is then a Sin in any Persons of that Nation to forsake, or not to consent to that Form, but to set up others of their own, without some weighty Reasons. Mr. Burnet will not be displeased, I hope, that I suppose him to be a Friend to National Churches, and that I take his Design in this place to have been, to guard against needless Separations from that particular

particular National Church of which he is a Member. If he be, I ask his Pardon; but if I may have leave to interpret him by Phileleutherus, I judge right; for he tells us, that (a) every one is under an Obligation to unite with that Form he finds ready settled to his hand, provided — (I need not repeat the Conditions) and adds: A Man who lives in a NATIONAL CHURCH, is obliged to unite with THAT. This Gentleman you see pleads for a National Church; and he pleads for it so far as to tell us elsewhere (tho' for what reason I profess I cannot see) that (b) to imagine that in a Christian Nation there should be no National Church, is UTOPIANISM. By a National Church he means (or I cannot tell what he means) some particular Form of external Polity, which the major part of the Christians in a Nation have consented to. For all Ecclesiastical Polity being (as we are now taught to believe) founded, not in any Laws of particular Persons appointing a particular Form, but in the Consent of Christians; a National Church therefore cannot receive its Denomination from such Laws, but from Consent; and if from Consent, it must be from the Consent of the Majority. For if there can be no National Church, unless every single Christian of a Nation shall agree in the same Form, to imagine that there can be any National Church at all will, I doubt, be Utopianism. And besides, a National Church upon this Supposition will be utterly inconsistent with a Separation; because it must cease to be a National Church as soon as there is a Separation. We will suppose this then to be the Case; and

(a) Ibid. p. 9.

(b) Ibid. p. 17.

say with Mr. Burnet, that it is a Sin against the Law of Peace and Charity to separate from a National Church without some weighty Reason. The Question that I would ask is this ; What may be adjudged a weighty Reason in this Case ? Mr. Burnet answers in the very next Words, that it is such a Reason as drives Men to the Choice whether they will adhere to CHRIST or to MEN ; or such a one at least, in their sincere Opinions. This I confess is somewhat loosely expressed ; but we may explain it by some other Passages. He tells us then elsewhere, that (c) It may often be commendable to submit to Terms and Conditions which it was very unlawful to impose, where those Terms do not DIRECTLY OPPOSE the END of all EXTERNAL COMMUNION. And again in another Place (d) His Lordship, says he, in a Dispute that he was engaged in with the DISSENTERS — only endeavours to prove — that the Terms of Communion which they scruple, are not IN THEMSELVES UNLAWFUL. I doubt not but that Mr. Burnet approves of this Argument of his Lordship ; and therefore from all this I gather, that, according to him, it is a Sin for any Man to separate from a National Church, unless the Terms of Communion imposed by that Church are, or appear to them to be, in themselves unlawful, i. e. unless that Church requires something be performed of its Members which Christ has particularly forbidden. Phileleutherus says the same thing. (e) Where (says he) there is a NATIONAL CHURCH which is BARELY TOLERABLE, i. e. in the Constitution of which

(c) Ibid. p. 241. (d) Ibid. p. 278. (e) Ibid. p. 18.

there are ever so many Errors, Defects, or Corruptions, yet if NOTHING SINFUL is imposed on, or required of the Members of it, 'tis the Duty of all the Christians in that Nation to hold Communion in that Church; and after this he also refers to some of the former Writings of the Bishop of Bangor, from whence he has produced a long Passage which is to the same Effect.

The Case then is thus far clear, that to forsake a National Church, and join to another, is a Sin; if the Terms of Communion imposed in that National Church be simply lawful; which tho' I acknowledge to be a very great Truth, yet I cannot see how it can be defended upon these Men's Principles. For the Sin of Separation is by them supposed to consist, not in the Breach of any particular Law by which in this Case Men are bound to communicate with the National Church (for such a Law, in their Opinion, there cannot be) but in the Breach of the general Law of Peace and Charity. That is to say, notwithstanding every Man with respect to any particular Law which others have Authority to lay upon him, is perfectly at Liberty to join in Communion with any Church or Congregation of Christians, yet the general Law of Peace and Charity RESTRAINS him in the use of that Liberty, and makes it necessary for him to communicate with the National Church. The Case appears to me to be exactly the same with that which is mentioned and resolved by St. Paul, concerning the eating of Meats in themselves indifferent. There is no particular Law of God which forbids me the use of any sort of Meat any more than another, and consequently, with respect to any such Law, I am

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perfectly at liberty to eat of any. But yet if any one be offended by my eating of some one particular sort, I am obliged to abstain from it, by that general Law of Charity which forbids me to offend my Brother.

This you see is the sole Foundation upon which these Men build the Sinfulness of separating from a National Church; a Foundation, in my Opinion, by much too weak to bear the Weight of such a Superstructure. To make which evident, I lay it down as a general Rule, that the Law of Peace and Charity can have no place but in things merely indifferent to the great End of Man, i. e. to his Final and Everlasting Happiness. Of this sort are all those things which relate to the Body; for which neither Reason nor Religion binds us to make the best Provision we can, and therefore we not only may, but oftentimes ought to forego many Conveniencies of this kind, for the good of others, and especially for their spiritual good. But certainly both Reason and Religion oblige every one of us to make the best Provision we can for our Souls, and therefore I am not to forego any one Advantage of this sort for the sake of others; for this were to suppose that in a matter of the greatest Consequence I am obliged to prefer the Interest of others before my own. Although therefore if any one be offended, i. e. be betrayed into Sin by my eating of some particular sort of Meat, I am by the Law of Charity bound to abstain from that sort of Meat; yet if any one should be offended at my praying so many times a Day, or at my fasting so many Days in the Week, I should (if I found any real spiritual Advantage by those Exercises) be so far from being obliged to forbear them, that on the other hand I should

should be obliged to continue them, notwithstanding such Offence. For that such a Person is offended is his own Fault, and 'tis unreasonable that I should debar my self of any spiritual Good, merely to gratify anothers Frowardness.

To apply now this general Rule to the Case before us. We will suppose a National Church already constituted, the Terms of Communion in which are only simply lawful, or (as Phileleutherus speaks from the Bishop of Bangor himself) barely tolerable; since all things that are lawful are not equally expedient, it must be supposed that other Forms may be contrived, which will contribute more to the spiritual Improvement of Christians. Put the Case then that a certain Number of Christians, sensible of this, should have agreed upon, and constituted another Form among themselves really more beneficial; and then ask any one of these Gentlemen, what they will have to say to shew the Reasonableness of complying with the National Form. To urge barely that the National Form may lawfully be complied with, is nothing to the Purpose, for these Persons are supposed to have separated, not upon the Account of any unlawful Terms of Communion imposed upon them, but only upon the account of greater Expediency. If it should be said that Separations from a lawful National Church give Offence, i. e. become the Occasion of Hatred and Strife among Christians, and argued from the general Law of Peace and Charity that they ought to conform; the Separatists may answer; "Look ye to that, who are uncharitable and contentious; we bear a Good Will " towards all Men, and are desirous to live peaceably and quietly with you, and every one of those " who do, or shall, differ from us. That ye have

“ no Authority by any Law of yours, to bind us
 “ to your Form, ye confess ; and why then should ye
 “ be offended at us for making use of that Liberty
 “ which Christ has given us for our Edification ?
 “ We cannot answer it to God or our own Con-
 “ sciences, to neglect any Opportunity he has put
 “ into our Hands for our spiritual Improvement ;
 “ and therefore we cannot depart from our Form
 “ to join in yours, which we are satisfied does
 “ not so well promote and set forward the great
 “ Ends of Religion. We acknowledge our selves
 “ bound by the Law of Peace and Charity ; but
 “ we think that this Law will not reach our Case.
 “ We are ready to consider the Frailties of our Bre-
 “ thren, and shall take care to avoid every thing
 “ which may minister unto them an Occasion of
 “ offending God, so far as is consistent with our
 “ own Eternal Interest. But if you expect that
 “ we should sacrifice any part of our Share in
 “ God’s Favour to the Passions and Prejudices of
 “ others, you impose upon us a very unreasonable
 “ Task, and we do not think our selves bound to
 “ comply with it.” What reasonable Answer could
 be given to such a Plea as this, I must profess
 for my own part, I am not able to see. If these
 Gentlemen can think of any themselves, I should be
 glad to hear it.

I need not observe, that the Argument will be
 the same, whether you suppose the Form agreed upon
 by this separate Congregation, to be really better
 than the National Form, or only so in their Opi-
 nions. For in truth, that is most expedient to me
 which I my self judge and find to be so. Right
 and Wrong have their fix’d Limits, which are not
 to be alter’d by the Opinions of Men. But in
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judging of the Usefulness and Expediency of any thing, regard must be had to Men's Circumstances, Tempers, and Dispositions; and consequently that which is in general and in the main most expedient, may not be so to every particular Person. Now if the Reader should be in pain lest these Separatists should want Ministers to officiate in their Congregations, Mr. Burnet will very quickly relieve him. For as to administering the Sacraments (f) one Christian has as much Right to do it as another, tho' the whole Congregation may, if they think so fit, order it to be performed by him whom they shall appoint to be their Mouth; i. e. by the Minister; for you must know Ministers are only the Mouths of the People; (g) God has not appointed any particular Order of Men to preach and officiate in Holy Things, but hath left every Body or Congregation of Christians to appoint them for themselves. This is the goodly Fabrick which is now rearing up upon my Lord Bishop of Bangor's Shoulders! Which if it can be supported, all Disputes about Separation will be at an End. For it will then be lawful for any Set or Number of Christians in any Nation to disjoint themselves from the National Church, to appoint Pastors of their own, to settle Rules and Orders for God's Worship among themselves, if at any time the National Forms should happen not to be to their own liking. If these Gentlemen can shew that this Consequence will not follow from their Principles, it concerns them to do it; if not (and I am perswaded they cannot) it should be a means to give them at

(f) Ibid. p. 165, 166, 167.

(g) Ibid. p. 43. 57. 154. 163. 168. 198. 118, 119.

least some Distrust of themselves, and to bring them back to a more impartial Search after that much despised Authority of some over others, which alone can administer a Remedy to this Evil. For certainly if there be no Medium between Popish Tyranny and Slavery on the one hand, and an unrestrained Licentiousness on the other; or (which is the same thing) if the Gospel allows of none; the State of Christianity is very much to be lamented; God will not be, as he has declared himself to be, the Author of Peace, but the Author of Confusion; nor will the Church of Christ agree with those orderly and æconomical Representations by which it is described to us in the Holy Scriptures.

By this time I think it is but too manifest what was the true Design of the Bishop of Bangor's Sermon and Preservative; or if there be any who can yet doubt, they must seek Satisfaction from some other hand; for to me this part of the Controversy seems so fully determined, that I shall never trouble my self any farther about it. I have said thus much now in order to possess the Reader with a just Sense of the Importance of the Debate that is likely to ensue. To shew him that the Dispute is not concerning any nice Points of Speculation, about which Christians may safely differ among themselves, but about a matter which must necessarily affect the Peace and good Order of the Church. The Cause is manifestly to be pleaded over again between the Church of England and Independency, only with this difference, that whereas the Debate was formerly used to be managed by the Church of England against avowed Separatists, or the Enemies of all Religion (who delight, at every turn, to throw in something, as a Bone of Contention among us) it is now to be managed

managed by the Church of England against some of her own Communion, yea, what is more, against some of her own Ministers, with a BISHOP of her own at the Head of them. This is an unhappy Circumstance I confess——But since it must be so, I may venture to promise it will be so, being well assured that among so many Learned and Judicious Divines which now adorn our Church, there will not be wanting those who will exert themselves in a Cause upon which Her Safety, and by consequence the Honour of Jesus Christ, and his most Holy Religion does so much depend.

I have run this Preface out farther than I expected; and to a Size, I fear, very disproportionate to the Treatise which it introduces. But if the Reader has met with any thing in it which he thinks worthy his Observation, he will not be displeased that I have detained him so long; for to deal ingenuously with him, 'tis more than I dare promise he will find in the Book itself.





A
D E F E N C E
O F T H E
Remarks upon SINCERITY, &c.

C H A P. I.

*Containing some Observations upon his Lordship's
general Censure of that Book.*

IN the Lord Bishop of Bangor's Answer to the Dean of Chichester's Vindication of the Corporation and Test Acts, Chap. 2. Sect. 8. p. 117. I find this Account given by his Lordship of my *Remarks upon a Position* of his concerning Religious Sincerity, viz. That therein I have bestowed a great deal of Severity and Satyr upon an incidental Sentence of his; the grammatical Sense of which I have greatly mistaken, and from the real meaning of which I cannot suffer my self to differ one Hair's Breadth. A few Observations upon these words, will serve as a very proper Introduction to what is to follow afterwards. And

First. His Lordship, you see, is pleased to call that *Position* of his upon which I have remarked, an incidental Sentence; at which I must confess I

am very much surprized. For an *Incidental Sentence*, in the Language of every body, signifies a *Sentence* which is brought into any Discourse by *Accident*; or, in other words, a *Sentence* which has no *immediate Relation* to the *main Point* under Consideration. Now then either his Lordship must allow us to say, that *all* he has said about *Sincerity* is *incidental*, or he must not pretend that *this Sentence* is *incidental*. If the Reader has his Lordship's *Preservative* at hand, I desire he would turn to p. 85. There he will find it laid down in general, that the thing which *justified* the *Protestants* in their Separation from the Church of *Rome*, was their *being perswaded in their own Consciences that the Popish Doctrines and Worship were corrupt*. At p. 86. this *Doctrine* is applied to the Case of *Papists* and *Nonjurors*; There also it is declared to be a *certain Rule to go by in all like cases*, and consequently that as the *Private perswasion* of the *Nonjurors* will justify them in their Separation from the *Papists*, so the *Private Perswasions* of any other Christians will justify them in their Separation from the *Nonjurors*. Thus far therefore his Lordship had been teaching in effect, that a *Man's Private Perswasion* will justify him in the Choice of any Communion, be it in its own Nature what it will. Now at p. 89. comes the *Demonstration* which was brought to prove all this, and which by this time, I suppose, is so well known, that I need not repeat it. I shall only add, that at p. 91. his Lordship sums up this whole Discourse in one single and general Inference (which is the very *Proposition* upon which I made my Remarks) *The Favour of God* THEREFORE follows *Sincerity considered as such*, and consequently *equally follows every equal degree of Sincerity*.

This

This is the Truth of the Case ; and now let any unprejudiced Person judge between us, whether this be an *incidental* Sentence or not.---- But what signifies it, perhaps you'll ask, to consider this ? Why truly not much as to the merits of the Cause. For if his Lordship has *incidentally* said that which in its Consequences will *certainly* and *necessarily* evacuate all the Laws of the Gospel, considered as available to the Salvation of Men ; his Lordship, I think, ought to be told of it, and desired for the future to be more careful in what he writes. But that which I Remark this for, is to shew you that I have *not* (as his Lordship by this Pretence would insinuate that I have) laid *greater stress* upon this Sentence than he himself appears to have laid upon it ; but on the contrary, that I chose it for the Subject of my *Remarks*, as it was a Passage in which the whole Substance of his Lordship's Doctrine about *Sincerity* was briefly comprized, and consequently a Passage from whence of all others we might the most certainly judge, how much his Lordship intended to conclude from those Arguments which he had made use of in the foregoing Parts of the Discourse. But were it so that I had taken that Advantage which it appears I have not taken, how indecently does his Lordship complain of it ! To say a Thing *happen'd by chance*, is in some sort offering to *excuse* it ; which can never be consistently done, unless there be also an acknowledgment of *something amiss*. But his Lordship in effect declares, that in this Sentence there is *nothing amiss*. He tells me, that I have put a wrong Construction upon his words, and sends me back to my *Grammar* to find out the right One. To observe now after this, that it is an *Incidental Sentence*, and insinuate from hence that I have treated it with

more severity than I ought, can serve to no purpose; unless his Lordship had a mind to set forth his own *Abilities*, by shewing that even the most *careless* Passages in his Books, are such as will stand their ground against the *severest* and most *critical* Examination.

But I must not pretend to take this amiss from his Lordship, since he has treated a much greater Man than my self after the same manner; I mean the Reverend the *Dean* of *Chichester*, who is charged with (a) *Popular Address*, because in the *Title Page* of his Book he has undertaken to write a *Vindication of the Corporation and Test Acts, in Answer to his Reasons for the Repeal of these Acts*. His Lordship has so mortal an Aversion to *Popularity*, that I question not but that he looks upon the least step towards it to be criminal, especially in the *Dean*; and thus far I am willing to agree with him, that to do a Thing merely for the sake of *Popular Applause*, is beneath a Man of Sense, as the endeavouring to compass it by base and little Arts is unworthy a Man of Honesty. Now if it be of any concern to the Publick, whether the *Corporation and Test Acts* be Repealed or not Repealed, the *Dean* I trust may be thought to have had this at heart, when he wrote his *Vindication*, and consequently he will be acquitted of the Charge of affecting *Popularity* on the first Score. And how he can be charged with it on the other Account, it would, I believe, puzzle the most cunning Man upon Earth, except his Lordship, to find out. For what? Has the *Dean* attempted to make himself Popular at his Lordships expence? Has he written a *Vindication* of the *Corporation* and

(a) Answer to the Dean of *Chichester*, p. 3.

Test Acts, in Answer to his Lordship's Reasons for the Repeal of those Acts, which Reasons his Lordship never gave? Why no. His Lordship has given Reasons for Repealing these Acts; but the Case is this, which all who are too much prejudiced to read on both Sides will not be led to judge, viz. That these Reasons are only a FEW WORDS ACCIDENTALLY DROPT in the Body of another large Debate. Very good; and his Lordship should have been forgiven this *Mischance*, if he would have retracted these Reasons; but so far is it from this, that this Plea stands in the Front of another large Debate, wherein his Lordship *ex professo*, and with all his might labours to justify these Reasons! Was ever any thing in the World so pleasant as this! His Lordship seems to be of Opinion, that 'tis wrong to Animadvert upon any Thing that he says, unless he thinks fit to write a great Book about it! Let his Notions be never so false in themselves; let them end in the Ruin of Christianity or of Civil Government, or of both; yet if he does not draw them forth in their full length by a Treatise on purpose, but drops them in few words here and there, as it were by accident, in the Body of some other large Debate, all is well on his Lordship's Side, and 'tis as much as a Man's Reputation is worth to go about to meddle with him! If his Lordship can make it out very plainly by what right He claims such a Priviledge as this, I make no doubt but he will find his Account in it. But if not, all this will appear to be only a kind Endeavour to load an Adversary with more than falls to his share; and then I suppose it will very quickly be seen who it is that affects Popularity.

I beg the Dean's pardon that I have intruded thus far into his Province; The Case is so exactly

ly parallel to mine, that I could not forbear taking this Notice of it; And I must needs acknowledge that 'tis some small comfort to me to find, that I am *the least* of those whom his Lordship has thought fit to deal with in this trifling manner.— But I must proceed no farther upon this Point, for fear of giving his Lordship farther Displeasure. For when all is done, *this* may be said to be an *Incidental Sentence* as well as the *other*, and I may expect to be told of it if I should handle it *too roughly*. Wherefore

Secondly. This Sentence (whether *incidental* or *not incidental*, for I care not now which you call it; this Sentence I say) it seems I have not rightly understood. *The grammatical Sense* of it I have *greatly mistaken*, and from *the real meaning* of it I cannot suffer myself to differ one *Hairs breadth*. Now if by *the real meaning* of this Sentence his Lordship understands *that which* he really meant by this Sentence; I answer, that I am not at all concerned to inquire whether I differ from it, or differ from it not. A Man's *meaning* is to be judged of from what he *says*; and therefore if his Lordship has said *one Thing* and meant *another*, the Consequence of that must lye upon himself, and not upon me. The only thing therefore to be considered is, whether I have, as his Lordship says, mistaken *the Grammatical Sense* of this Sentence, *i. e.* Whether I have affixed any other Sense to this Sentence, than what the words according to the most plain and obvious construction do naturally import. This I say is the Point, which I shall first Debate with his Lordship; and after that I will discuss some other matters in my Book which have been excepted against. Give me leave only, before I proceed, to make this one Observation, *viz.* That his Lordship by alledging that I have *mif-*
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taken the Sense of his Position, has tacitly owned that in the Sense I have put upon it, it cannot be defended ; which I hope may have some weight with those who understanding his Lordship as I have understood him, do yet pretend to justify him in what he has there advanced.

C H A P. II.

Containing an Answer to Mr. Pyle's Exceptions against my Interpretation of his Lordship's Position.

MY Remarks upon Sincerity may be divided into three Parts. The First is that in which I have endeavoured to state the Sense of that Position in his Lordship's *Preservative*, which is the Subject of those Remarks. The Second is that wherein I have laid down the Consequences of the Doctrine contained in that Position. The Third is that in which I have considered what foundation that Doctrine has in the Nature and Reason of things. Concerning the First of these the Question now is, whether I have stated the Sense of that Position rightly, *i. e.* according to the most natural and obvious import of the Words, or not. His Lordship, you see, has declared his Opinion on the Negative side, tho' he has not been pleased to give any Reason for it, or to tell me whereabouts my Mistake lies. Whether he ever intends to do it I cannot tell ; but if he does intend it, I hope to spare him the trouble, by shewing that the Words are not fairly capable of any other Sense than that which I have put upon them. And because Mr. Pyle

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is the only Person that has particularly consider'd what has been offered by me upon this Branch of the Controversy, I shall therefore be obliged to make him the Principal in this Debate. Only I must let this worthy Gentleman know aforehand, that I think it neither needful, nor proper, to persue him step by step, but that I shall take in his Exceptions as they lie in my way, according to that Order and Method, which I judge to be most convenient.

The Position then (if it needs to be repeated) is this ; *The Favour of God follows SINCERITY, considered as such, and consequently equally follows every equal Degree of SINCERITY.* Concerning the Sense of the word *Sincerity*, I am sure I shall have no Dispute with his Lordship or his Friends. Mr. Pyle can tell me with a sneer, that I have (b) acknowledged *his Lordship's Definition* to be *very just*. And since this Gentleman sets out upon the merry Pin, I'll give him leave to laugh at me once more, by telling him that perhaps I was a little too hasty in making this acknowledgment. *Sincerity*, according to his Lordship, is (as I said) when a Man follows the Dictates of his own Conscience or Understanding, after having made use of the best *means* he has, for his *Information*. But *Sincerity* in common Speech (I think) is usually opposed to *Hypocrisy*, and consequently implies no more than that a Man acts according to his *real Sentiments*, whether he has used the *best means* for his *Information*, or used them *not*. Mr. Pyle himself has used the word in this Sense (*Letter p. 28.*) where speaking of *St. Paul*, who declared he had lived in all

(b) Third Letter to a Member of the University, p. 4.

good Conscience; he declares the meaning of it to be, that he was SINCERE, or void of DOUBLE DEALING. However, I do not in the least repent me of this Concession. The World was even then well nigh tir'd out with this Controversy, and I was therefore willing to make my part in it as short as I could. Wherefore seeing his Lordship had so plainly told us what HE meant by *Sincerity*, and seeing every Man has a right to use words in what Sense he pleases, provided he takes care to acquaint his Reader how he uses them: I thought it better to follow his Lordship in his own way, than to stand cavilling with him about his Definition; upon which Account I did not so exactly consider whether it was right, or whether it was wrong. If his Lordship therefore will pardon the Injury, I will once more leave this matter as I find it, and proceed to the words *considered as such*. Now by *Sincerity considered as such*, (I said) his Lordship means *Sincerity of it self*, or *Sincerity alone*; and Mr. Pyle is so kind as to (c) agree with me in this, if by the Phrases OF IT SELF and ALONE I mean—— If? Why do you doubt, Sir? my words are plain, if you are but willing to understand. By *Sincerity of it self*, or *alone*, I mean, and can mean nothing else than *Sincerity*, without any other Circumstance or Qualification. And this is what his Lordship means by *Sincerity as such*, or he means nothing. 'Tis ridiculous therefore in you to say, that you will agree with me, if by *Sincerity alone*, I mean *Sincerity without the Observance of any thing claimed by the Authority of other Men as necessary to Justification*. For *Sincerity without any other Qualification* excludes every thing you

(c) Ibid.

can conceive, as well as those Things, *the observance whereof is claimed by the Authority of Men.* But what does his Lordship mean, when he says, *That the Favour of God follows Sincerity?* Why this too I have explained, and shown it from his Lordship's own express words, to be, that Sincerity gives a Man a *Right or Title* to God's Favour. This left no room for *Hesitation*, and therefore I have Mr. Pyle consenting to it freely, and in as full Terms as I could wish. This, says he, *(d) is true in all that Latitude wherein MAN can be understood to have any CLAIM or TITLE upon GOD, either with respect to the Reason of Things, or to any express Promise from God.*

Thus far therefore Mr. Pyle himself could see that *(e) there would be but very little difference between us.* I will venture to say, that thus far there possibly can be no difference between us upon any just and reasonable Ground. The only Dispute, so far as I can perceive, will lie in this, *viz.* What is the true import of these Words, *equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity.* Now for the clearing up of this Point in my Remarks, I offered it to be considered, that in Sincerity there are *no Degrees.* Hereupon Mr. Pyle very gravely asks: *(f) Does the Gentleman mean no Degrees of one Man's Sincerity above that of another; or no Degrees of it in one and the same Man at different times? or does he intend to be understood as denying it in both Instances——?* But why all this Questioning again? Every one sees, that when I say that there are *no Degrees in Sincerity,* I mean (what only can be meant) that Sincerity is *one, simple, indivisible Thing,* which admits of neither *more nor less,* and consequently that I must

(d) Ibid. (e) Ibid. (f) Ibid.

be understood as *denying* that there are *Degrees* of *Sincerity* in ALL Instances where *Sincerity* comes under Consideration. But *this*, that there are *no degrees* of *Sincerity*, I did not set down as (g) his Lordship's meaning; i. e. as if his Lordship had supposed, that there were *no Degrees* in *Sincerity*, as Mr. Pyle very idly and extravagantly suggests; No; but I offered it (in direct opposition to his Lordship, who supposed the contrary) as that which necessarily resulted from the very Notion of *Sincerity*, which being (according to his own Definition) then, and then only, when a man uses his BEST Endeavours, it must therefore lie in an indivisible Point, and consequently be either wholly or not at all. And this I did, that I might at once shew the true and full Extent of his Lordship's Principle, which being, that all Persons equally sincere, are entitled to God's Favour; it must therefore (if there be *no Degrees* of *Sincerity*) be affirmed absolutely, that ALL Sincere Persons are equally intitled to God's Favour.

I know not whether it will be worth my while to consider this Point over again; because upon supposition that *Sincerity* will admit of *Degrees*, his Lordship's Principle will be liable to the very same Objections, as I shall shew you by by. However, because Mr. Pyle has been very elaborate upon this Argument, that he may not grow too big in his Triumphs, I will briefly reply to his grand Objection, which is this, viz. (h) That the word BEST is oft-times used in a Relative or Comparative Sense. That *Sincerity* cannot imply the doing EVERY THING, and using EVERY MEANS that comes within the strict possibility of a Man's Power, because if it does, no Man perhaps

(g) Ibid. p. 5. (h) Ibid. p. 5, 6.

either is, or ever was *Sincere*. Consequently that the Bishop in defining *Sincerity* by a Man's using his *BEST Endeavours*, cannot be supposed to have used that Phrase in that *Rigid and Unlimited* Signification.— Thus in effect, Mr. Pyle. But to what purpose, or for whose use is this? For mine? I have no occasion for such Instructions; I never was so Absurd as to imagine that *Sincerity* does imply the doing every Thing, and using every means that comes within the strict possibility of a Man's Power. I never supposed that by a Man's using his *BEST endeavours* his Lordship meant any Thing else, or that any Thing else can in sound Sense be meant, than a Man's using all those means which either do, or may appear to him to be reasonable and fitting. And therefore if this be what Mr. Pyle would have when he says, (i) That by God's requiring a Man's utmost Endeavours in the use of all proper Means, is meant nothing more than his requiring of him all those Things or Means which the Person knows and feels to be plain and easy for him to understand, and are fairly within the compass of his Power and Faculties to attain: If this, I say, be what he intends by this and some other such like loose and undeterminate Sentences, by which he has described to us the Nature of *Sincerity*, I shall have no Difference with him on this Account. But what will he get by all this? Let him try if he pleases, and see whether this Notion of *Sincerity* will not exclude Degrees, as much as if it were supposed to consist in doing every Thing that comes within the strict possibility of a Man's Power. To me it is as plain as any Thing can be that it does. For if *Sincerity* consists in a

(i) Ibid. p. 6.

Man's using ALL those Means which do or may appear to him to be reasonable and fitting, it is evident that he who falls short of this, is not at all Sincere. Suppose then that he has gone *thus far*; Can he go any farther? Can he? Yes, without doubt, in the Notion of *strict possibility*, he can; But in the way of *good Sense and Reason* he cannot. He may do more, but he cannot be more Sincere; For to do more than what is reasonable and fitting, is not Sincerity but Folly. There can be no Question but that Mr. Pyle might, if he pleased, travel into *France or Italy*, and learn the Doctrines of *Popery* from the Mouths of some of the most celebrated Professors. But should he Attempt this notwithstanding, upon the most mature deliberation with himself, he was fully convinced that he might as well satisfy himself about those Doctrines by their *Writings at home*, he might applaud his own Industry if he would, but for my own part I should think that his time might be much better employed.

If Mr. Pyle will be pleased to consider of this, he may see perhaps at the last, that I am not so much out of the way in affirming, that there are no Degrees in Sincerity. Nor let me be any more told that (k) there are Degrees of ACTIVITY and INDUSTRY in the use of means and opportunities of Knowledge. As yet I have Sense enough left to see that this is true, and at the same time to discover that it is nothing at all to the Purpose. If indeed any Degree of Industry and Activity were Sincerity (i. e. if Industry and Sincerity were all one) then I grant, that Sincerity must have Degrees. But forasmuch as this is not the Case, but Sincerity, even according to Mr. PYLE's own Notion (if he has any determinate Notion at all about it) then only is, when a Man

(k) Ibid.

is arrived to the *last* and *highest* Degree of *Industry*, which it is *reasonable* and *fitting* for a Man to use ; let him consider, I say, once more of what I have said, and make out his *Degrees* as well as he can—— But enough, and too much upon a Point which does not enter into the *Essence* of the Debate. For, as I observed just now, which way soever the Case be determined, his Lordship's Principle will be liable to the same *Objections*. The main Fault I find with it (as every one knows) is, that it makes God, in dispensing his Favours, to have *no regard* to any *Thing but the Sincerity of Mens Hearts* ; which if it be true, will be *equally* so, whether *Sincerity* has *Degrees*, or whether it has *none*.

To set this Matter aside, therefore ; and to come to something which Mr. Pyle seems to be not a little angry that he did not hear of before. He tells his Friend, That (1) *the next Thing naturally to have been expected from me, in order to have compleatly stated the Sense of his Lordship's Proposition, was to have defined what is meant by the FAVOUR of God, and what by its following Sincerity EQUALLY*. And here he charges me with great *Reservedness* and *Secrecy*, in not opening at first *Entrance* the plain and simple *Meaning* of these *Words*, but bringing it in as *Turns* should serve, for the sake of I know not what *After-game* which I had to play, and of drawing certain *Conclusions* and *deadly Inferences* from *strenuous Premises*. Now I beseech you, Sir, by the love of *Truth*, to hear me with some *Patience*. I do freely and ingenuously confess, That I have neither at first *Entrance*, nor any where in my Book, set my self *professedly* to explain these Phrases ; but from the

(1) Ibid.

bottom of my Heart I do assure you, That I had no such *Plots* and *Contrivances* in my head as you are pleased to fancy, nor was there any other Reason for my omitting this, but only that I could not in the least suspect that these *Phrases* needed any explication. By the *Favour of God*, every one understands (if indeed any words there be by which it can be made plainer) the good *Will*, or *Approbation* of God, together with all those *Benefits*, or *Blessings*, which he bestows in consequence of that *Approbation*; and Mr. Pyle was so very sensible of this, that although he has found Fault with *me* for not explaining this word, yet *he himself* has not so much as once explained it, but proceeded all along in his Argument *upon this* Notion, as if it was (as indeed it was by me) *taken for granted*. Thus far therefore I should hope I may be excused in this Omission; and as to the Phrase of *equally following every equal Degree of Sincerity*, Mr. Pyle may wrangle about it if he pleases, but I am confident that there is no Man of Common Sense, who upon the very first reading of it would not understand the Meaning of it to be, that *by how much the more Sincere* a Man is, *by so much the more* he is in God's Favour. Now since, as I have shown, by *following Sincerity*, his Lordship did not *barely* mean that the Favour of God *attended* upon Sincerity, but that Sincerity gave a Man a *Right* or *Title* to God's Favour; since likewise, as has been shown, *Sincerity* admits of *no Degrees*, but must be every where *equally* or *not at all*; the Consequence is plain, as I have laid it down in my *Remarks*, that according to his Lordship *ALL* sincere Persons, *i. e.* *all those who use their utmost endeavours to inform themselves rightly, and act according to the best of their Judgments*, have a right to an **EQUAL SHARE**

SHARE or DEGREE of the Favour of God. This I say, is so clearly the Case, that as I then thought that there was no need for me particularly to explain what his Lordship meant by *equally following every equal Degree of Sincerity*: So I now think I might, without any Prejudice to his Lordship, pass over all that Mr. Pyle has said to shew that I have misunderstood this Sentence; which indeed is of such a sort, as I never once saw drop, till now, from the Pen of any Writer who pretends to be a Man of Sense and a Scholar. But because the issue of the present Controversy does pretty much depend upon the Sense of these Words, and because Mr. Pyle perhaps would grow angry, and tell me once more, That much has been written in Vindication of his Lordship's true and consistent meaning in these Expressions——without the least shadow of a candid and rational Reply; I will, I must, submit to the drudgery of Examining it; and accordingly I present to my Patient Reader, the whole Passage intire, which is as follows.

Had it never at all been shown, that by equally following is naturally to be understood proportionably following the several Degrees of Sincerity, so as to reward Sincere Men not all with equal Happiness, but with Happiness suited and proportioned to the several Measures of Virtuous Qualifications and Perfections Men are endowed with by the Honest and Sincere use of the different Degrees of Light and Knowledge they have enjoyed: That Sincerity is rewarded as such, by its being made the only, but sure ground of Mens being accepted at all, and becoming proper Subjects of a Reward; and yet that the several Degrees of Rewards themselves, still depended upon the different Advancements of Men in the use of the different Numbers of Talents committed to them; That in accepting

the Sincerity of all Men without distinction, as the Qualification for a just and merciful Reward, God acts uniformly, constantly, and invariably agreeably to the Perfections of his own Nature, to the stricter Relation it has to our Nature, and to the Nature of Things; but in bestowing on Men several different Degrees of Light, Advantages and Abilities, and in differently rewarding the different and proportionate improvements of these, God does in the proper Sense what he will with his own, so that equal Sincerity is by him equally rewarded, when in it self considered, and where nothing else intervenes to heighten or lessen the Reward: It being consistently allowed that greater or less Qualifications going along with equal Degrees of Sincerity, may entitle Persons equally Sincere, to different Rewards, in which case not the Sincerity merely, but the Qualifications render one capable of, and proper for greater Happiness than another, and yet still equal Sincerity is as such, or cæteris paribus, equally respected and rewarded: That this is the most natural Construction of the Bishop's Expressions, and so consistent with the Tenor of Scripture, and especially with the Famous Parable of the Talents, and the 2d Chapter to the Romans compared together, that to imagine my Lord could intend any other, were to imagine him void of all common Understanding, in respect to either the way of right Reasoning or the Sense of Scripture: I say, Sir, had nothing of this been already done—it would have been very pardonable, at least much more excusable, for his Adversaries to have imputed the foregoing Sentiments to him. But since it has been done—for Writers still to step forth anew, and palm these Things afresh upon us, seems to bespeak a Determination to Banter, and not to Argue. p. 8, 9, 10.

So then; we are at last got to the end of this long-winded Sentence, which contains the whole

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of Mr. Pyle's Sense of this Matter ; in which he has referred to what has afore been said in *his own Book*, and in the Writings of *others*, none of which I have by me but the Bishop's *Answer to the Representation*, and Mr. Burnet's *first Letter to Mr. Law*, in neither of which I can find any Thing to the Purpose. But not being willing to mistrust either Mr. Pyle's Judgment or Fidelity, I will suppose that he has here given us a compleat Abstract of all that has been heretofore offered upon this Head, and that this Passage contains a full Account of what he and the rest of the Bishop's Friends suppose to be his Lordship's *true consistent Meaning*, and of their Reasons for it. All this, I say, for quiet's sake I am willing to suppose ; but then there is one Thing which very much puzzles me still, and that is, to find out the *true consistent Meaning of this Passage*. To me, it appears to be a heap of words without any consistent Meaning all, some giving me up all that I would have, and others again taking it away. For instance. By *EQUALLY following*, it seems, is *naturally to be understood PROPORTIONABLY following the several Degrees of Sincerity*—— How Mr. Pyle ! Does *equally* naturally signify *proportionably* ? I hope not. If I give to *one* Labourer *two* Shillings for *one* days Work, and to another *one* Shilling for *half a days* Work, I reward them both *proportionably*, but I do not reward them both *equally*. But that perhaps which Mr. Pyle would have said (and that which he must say, if he has a mind to speak Sense) is this, That *by equally following EVERY EQUAL DEGREE*, is *naturally to be understood*, or *naturally implies proportionably following the several Degrees of Sincerity* ; which is true, and comes up exactly to what I say these words imply, viz. That *by how much the more*
Sincere

Sincere a Man is, by so much the more he is in God's Favour. But what then does he mean by adding, So as to reward sincere Men, not all with equal Happiness, but with Happiness suited and proportioned to the several Measures of virtuous Qualifications and Perfections Men are endowed with BY the Honest and Sincere use of the different Degrees of Light and Knowledge they have enjoyed? What I say, does he mean by adding these Words, which contain a Sense as directly opposite to the other as Light is to Darkness? If God proportions his Favour according to the several Measures of Virtuous Qualifications and Perfections which Men have attained unto by or under Sincerity, as these last words imply; it is not then true what is asserted in the first, viz. That he proportions his Favour to the several Degrees of Sincerity; Because upon this supposition it may so happen that he who is less Sincere may (upon the Account of greater Improvements) be better Rewarded than he who is more Sincere. Mr. Pyle confesses as much. Greater or less Qualifications going along with equal Degrees of Sincerity, may entitle Persons equally Sincere to different Rewards, and this he says is consistently allowed. Consistently! With what, Sir? Certainly not with saying that God proportions his Favour to the Degrees of Sincerity; For this necessarily implies, that where the Sincerity is greater, there the Reward will be greater; and where it is less, there the Reward also will be less. In this Case 'tis the Sincerity merely that must make the Difference; whereas in the other, you your self say, That 'tis not the Sincerity merely, but the Qualifications that render one capable of and proper for greater Happiness than another. Well; But this you'll say is consistent with affirming that *ceteris paribus* God proportions his Favour to the several De-

grees of Sincerity ; or that equal Sincerity is
 equally respected and rewarded where nothing
else intervenes to heighten or lessen the Reward.
 Who doubts it ! And is this then at last what you
 say is *the most natural Construction of the Bishop's*
Expression ! Why so it seems indeed. But surely,
 Sir, it is high time for you to have done *Writing*,
 at least, if you can believe *that* to be the *natural*
Construction of any Sentence, which *alters* the
Nature of it, and from an *absolute* Assertion,
 makes it to become a *limited* one ! To say that
the Favour of God equally follows every equal De-
gree of Sincerity, is one Thing. And to say,
That the Favour of God equally follows every equal
Degree of Sincerity cæteris paribus, and where
nothing else intervenes, &c. is another. And
 therefore if his Lordship had had a mind to have
 been understood in this latter Sense, he should have
 added this Clause ; which since he has not done,
 I see not, for my part, what Right Mr. Pyle has
 to *suppose* it, unless he has a Privilege (which in-
 deed, by his way of Writing, one would think
 he lays claim to) of making Sentences signify
 even just what he pleases. Mr. Pyle seems to
 have been aware of this Objection, and there-
 fore he has taken care to express himself in such
 a manner as would induce an unattentive Rea-
 der to believe that his Lordship *has* indeed added
 this Clause. His Lordship you must know has
 made use of the Phrase *as such*. Now (says Mr.
 Pyle) *Equal Sincerity is as such, or cæteris paribus*
equally respected and rewarded. As such OR cæteris
paribus ! As if these two Phrases were of the
 same Signification ! But every one that has not
 forgotten his *Accidence*, must know, that *cæteris*
paribus signifies *when all other Respects, Circum-*
stances or Qualifications are equal. Now if it be
 considered that his Lordship has, in the former
 part

part of the Sentence, laid it down as a Principle, that the Favour of God follows Sincerity *considered as such* (i. e. as I have shown, Sincerity alone, or Sincerity *unattended* with any other Circumstance or Qualification) and deduced it (N. B.) as a Consequence from hence, in the latter part, that the Favour of God *equally follows every equal Degree* of Sincerity. If this, I say, be considered, it will appear, not only that his Lordship has *not added* this Clause, but that the Sentence really will not *admit* of it. *The Favour of God, says his Lordship, follows Sincerity considered as such, AND CONSEQUENTLY— And consequently What? Why, says Mr. Pyle, and consequently cæteris paribus equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity.* Which is as much as to say, That BECAUSE the Favour of God follows Sincerity WITHOUT any other Circumstance or Qualification, THEREFORE IF, or upon Condition that, all other Circumstances or Qualifications BE EQUALLY, equal Degrees of Sincerity will be attended with equal Favour. How Jeune, how Insipid is this! How (m) *mighty an Enchantment must this Bishop of ours, this clear Writer have upon his Pen, if he can draw up an Argument in which the Premises and the Conclusion bear no Proportion or Relation the one to the other! Is not this, Mr. Pyle, making his Lordship void of all common Understanding in respect to the way of right Reasoning? And yet, Sir, this is the very Case, if your Interpretation be admitted. For let me ask once more, What does his Lordship mean when he says, that the Favour of God follows Sincerity considered as such? Is it that Sincerity is the only Thing which God regards in*

(m) Ibid. p. 33.

bestowing his Favour? If so, then the *Conclusion* will *contradict* the *Premises*; for to say that the Favour of God equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity, *then, and then only*, when all other *Circumstances* or *Qualifications* are equal, is to suppose that Sincerity is *not* the *only* Thing that God *regards* in bestowing his Favour. Or does the Bishop mean barely this, that Sincerity is *alone sufficient* to procure, or entitle Men to God's Favour? This I am sure is the least that can be meant. But even then the *Premises* and the *Conclusion* will have no *Relation* to one another. For the *Premises* and the *Conclusion* have *then* no *Relation* to one another, when the *Truth* of the *latter* does not at all depend upon the *Truth* of the *former*. Now that all Persons *equally Sincere* are *ceteris paribus*, or *all other Circumstances being equal*, *equally* or *alike* in God's Favour, must be acknowledged, if it were only said, that Sincerity is *one* among *many* *Qualifications* which recommend a Man to God's Favour, and consequently this can have no dependance upon his Lordship's Principle, that Sincerity *alone* is sufficient to procure, or entitle Men to God's Favour.

The short of the matter is this; That there is no way to make his Lordship's way of Arguing *just* and *Logical* (without running extravagantly from the plain and obvious Sense of the words) but to suppose that his Intention was in *both* Parts of the Sentence, to exclude *every thing* besides *Sincerity* from having *any thing* to do in *procuring* the Favour of God. Upon this foot indeed all will be easy, natural, and strong, as you will quickly perceive by making the Experiment. Try first, the Argument forward; The Favour of God follows Sincerity *considered as such*, i. e. Sincerity is the *only thing* which
God

God *regards* in bestowing his Favour. What can be more just than from hence to infer, that the Favour of God *equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity*, how *differently Qualified* soever in *other respects* Men may be? Try it again *backward*; The Favour of God *equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity*, i. e. all Persons *equally Sincere* are *equally or alike* in God's Favour. What can be more necessarily implied under this, than that *Sincerity* is the *only thing* which God *regards* in bestowing his Favour? If Mr. Pyle could have found out any other expedient by which his Lordship's *Premises* and his *Conclusion* might be brought to so good an Agreement as this, it would have been very much to the purpose to have mentioned it. But this of all other Things seems to have been the least in his Thoughts. Such was his haste to make his Lordship speak *Truth*, that he never consider'd how to make him speak *consistently*, or whether the Sense which he had put upon his words were agreeable to that *Relation* which the several Parts of the Sentence bear to one another; for which *judicious* management, how much he deserves his Lordship's Thanks, I shall leave them to agree among themselves—— But what need is there for me to pursue this Point any farther, when his Lordship's *last Words* considered *by themselves* and *without any manner of regard* had to what goes before, are *alone* sufficient to bear me out? I do insist upon it, and for ever shall insist upon it in opposition to his Lordship and all his Friends, that to say that The Favour of God *equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity*, can imply no less than that *by how much* the more *Sincere* a Man is, *by so much the more* he is in God's Favour. That therefore this Sentence *of it self*, and without any thing else considered with, or added

ded to it, does effectually and necessarily exclude every thing but Sincerity, from having any thing to do in procuring God's Favour. And that Mr. Pyle, by adding the Clause *cæteris paribus*, (which his Lordship himself never added) has taken an unjustifiable Liberty; such a Liberty as if it were admitted in all like Cases, no Words or Sentences could have any fixed and determinate meaning, but must depend entirely upon the Arbitrary Will and Pleasure of him who undertakes to interpret them. Suppose that I should any where have affirmed that all who acknowledge King George's Title, and have taken the Oaths of Allegiance, &c. are equally Friends to his Administration; No doubt but his Lordship and those of his Party would accuse me as having asserted a notorious Falsehood. But I will maintain this and almost any thing else, if I may be allowed the same Liberty that Mr. Pyle has allowed himself. For when such a Sentence comes to be examined, and I find my self at a loss how to defend it, 'tis but clapping in a *cæteris paribus*, and the business is done. Since how false soever the Assertion may be without that Clause, with it it must be certainly and undeniably true. Instances of this sort need not be multiplied. Every one sees that there can be no such Thing as disputing upon the Sense of a Passage in any Author, if those who engage in the Debate may take upon themselves to put in words which give that Passage a Sense quite different from, and even contrary to, what, as it stands, it does naturally import. But tho' I thus complain of Mr. Pyle in point of justice, yet I cannot but commend him in point of Policy. For since, as I very plainly perceive, he is fully resolved that his Lordship shall be always in the right, and all his Opponents for ever in the

wrong

wrong; 'twas certainly his wisest way to endeavour, with all speed, to reconcile the World to this and some other such like Artifices, which he has found it necessary, for the carrying of his Point, to have recourse to more than once, as will be seen in the subsequent Parts of this Discourse.

Upon the whole then I conclude; That his Lordship's Position, according to the *Natural* and *Grammatical* Construction of it, implies what in my *Remarks* I have supposed it to imply, viz. That the Sincerity of a Man's Heart is the *only* Thing which God *regards* in dispensing his Favour. And let not Mr. Pyle take it ill to be told that, whether he knows it or not, he has asserted the same thing expressly in this very Passage upon which I am now remarking. *Sincerity*, says he, *is the ONLY GROUND of Mens being accepted at all, and becoming proper Subjects of a Reward, i. e. Sincerity is the only Reason or Motive upon which God accepts and rewards any Man, or, which is the same thing, Sincerity is the only Thing which in that Case God has any regard to.* Now whereas he adds, that yet, or notwithstanding this, *the several Degrees of Rewards themselves depend upon the different Advancements of Men in the use of the different Numbers of Talents committed to them*; in this, he has only farther manifested his own inconsistency. For these *Advancements*, whatever they be, are certainly something *distinct* from Sincerity. Now if *nothing but* Sincerity, or (which is all one) *nothing distinct from* Sincerity, is a *Reason* or *Motive* with God to *accept* or *reward* any Man, then the *several Degrees of Rewards* can depend upon *nothing but* Sincerity. For certainly that which is not a *Reason* or *Motive* with God why a Man should be *at all* rewarded, can never

be a *Reason* or *Motive* with him why he should be *better* rewarded.

When Mr. *Pyle* will be pleased to write so clearly upon this Point, as that we may certainly know what he would deny and what he would affirm, we shall have more Encouragement to Debate it farther with him. In the mean while, since by all that can be gathered from what he has said, it appears that he is not able to put any other sound and consistent Sense upon the Bishop's Words than what I have already put upon them, I shall look upon my self to be thus far justified, and proceed to the other Parts of his Book. Indeed I am almost ashamed that I have spent so many words upon a matter, upon which (had it not been for humouring Mr. *Pyle*) none at all would have been necessary. But when Men are set upon wrangling, it is good sometimes to follow them in their own way; and if by what I have now offered this Gentleman should be brought to consider the Case with a little more Temper and Judgment, I shall not think my time ill bestowed; though, to say the Truth, 'tis what I do not mightily expect from him.

C H A P.

C H A P. III.

Containing an Answer to Mr. Pyle's Exceptions against the Consequences drawn from his Lordship's Position.

HAVING thus secured the *Foundation* of my *Remarks*, by shewing that I have not mistaken the Sense of his Lordship's words, we shall be the better able to maintain the *Super-structure* which is built upon it; which consists of several *Consequences* drawn before by the *Learned Committee*, and by me reduced to this general one, viz. That all sincere Persons, or (for it is the same Thing) all Persons equally Sincere, have equally a Right or Title to God's Favour, i. e. (for this I confess was my meaning) have a Right to an equal Share or Measure of God's Favour, whatsoever Method of Religion they follow. If the Reader will turn to page 3. of my *Remarks*, he will find those *Consequences* set down, together with the *Reasons* by which they are supported: I think it no more needful to repeat them here, than I do to take Notice of those *Eighteen* or *Twenty Lines* which Mr. Pyle has (n) written about them, which I must be contented to let rest under those Clouds of obscurity, which this Author delights perpetually to wrap himself up in, when he wants something to say. Every common Reader will understand that those *Consequences* must needs follow from his Lordship's Position, if that general Inference just now mentioned, in which, according to Mr.

(n) Ibid. p. 10.

Pyle's own Confession, I have (o) *rightly summ'd them all up*, does follow from it. And that it does follow from it, I cannot mistrust either Mr. Pyle's Sense or Modesty so much as to think he will now deny. For indeed, that *all sincere Persons have a right to an equal Share or Degree of God's Favour* (which I have shewn to be what his Lordship's *Position* imports) and that *all sincere Persons have a Right to an equal Share or Degree of God's Favour, whatever Method of Religion they follow* (which is the general *Inference* drawn by me from that *Position*) are Sentences between which there is no other Difference than this, *viz.* That the *latter* is *less general* than, and consequently must needs be *included* under the *former*.

But this it seems is an (p) *Absurdity, never so much as thought of by his Lordship or any of his Advocates*. And what is that to me? If his Lordship and his Advocates cannot understand the true and necessary Consequences of their own Doctrines; or if they express themselves in words which carry a different Sense from what they really intend, let them look to it. I have nothing to do with Mens *Thoughts* any farther than they appear from their *Words*, and according to this Rule of judging, I will venture to say, that I know of *one* of his Lordship's *Advocates* who *thought of this Absurdity*, and that is Mr. Pyle himself, who has asserted it in as plain Terms as possible. Out of many Passages which might be produced to prove this, I shall content my self to select One, which I find drag'd in where it has nothing to do; pertinent Matter having, as I suppose, been very scarce, or

(o.) Ibid. (p) Ibid.

in hopes, it may be, that standing thus out of the way, it might not be so readily taken Notice of on this Occasion. But it is by much too material to be overlooked, and therefore Reader take it entire as follows.

The only Question is, What that Respect or Relation was in which his Lordship is charged to have put all Communions upon the level, as to sincere Men. 'Tis agreed upon to be the Favour of God, the Justification of all such Men before God, or the Salvation of Men. And here, Sir, comes in the Foundation of all this Misunderstanding ; 'Tis here Mr. Stebbing may please to see the Original of his Own, and of the Committee's Misrepresentation. His Lordship, most evidently, by God's Favour, Justification, and Salvation, means one Thing, while they are determined to mean another. Take it in the Bishop's Sense, for that general Favour of God toward Sincerity, which terminates uniformly in saving all Sincere Persons from Condemnation, and bestowing on them Rewards proportionate to their several Qualifications and Advancements in Real Religion ; and then 'tis certainly clear, that the Intrinsic Goodness of one Method above another, does not at all come into Consideration ; all being thus far justified by virtue of the mere Sincerity of their Choices. But take it in their Sense, for that Favour and Justification which terminates in equal Rewards to be given to all Sincere Persons, Christian, Jewish, and Heathenish alike ; and then 'twere an Absurdity indeed to affirm intrinsic Goodness to make no Difference, when 'tis that alone that qualifies one Man for being a Subject proper and fit for greater future Glories than another, p. 13.

I have recited this Passage at large, because I would leave Mr. Pyle no room to say that I have wrong'd him ; and now before I make that
use

use of it which I principally intend, I will beg of the Reader to take notice how absurdly he has crowded the very *Point* in Debate, into that which he pretends is only an *Explication* of the *Terms* of the Question. By the *Favour* of God and *Justification*, says he, the Bishop means THAT *Favour* of God towards Sincerity which terminates in proportionate Rewards, whereas the Committee mean THAT *Favour* which terminates in equal Rewards. That *Favour* which terminates——! What Stuff is this! Why the very Question, Sir, is where the *Favour* of God terminates; i. e. whether it terminates in equal Rewards upon upon all sincere Persons whatever Method of Religion they follow! Now if your meaning be to say, that by the *Favour* of God the Bishop means that *Favour* which does NOT terminate in equal Rewards upon all sincere Persons whatsoever Method of Religion they have followed (which must be the case if you mean to say any thing to the Purpose) who sees not that under the Notion of explaining *Terms*, you directly beg the thing that is to be proved? To say what is meant by the *Favour* of God, is one thing, and to say where the *Favour* of God terminates, is another. And therefore, Sir, for you under the pretence of doing the former, to tell us any thing relating to the latter, is just as pertinent as it would be if whilst you are giving a general Description of a *House*, you should take upon you to say, how long or how wide it is—— But this by the way. That which I produce this Passage for, is to shew, that Mr. Pyle (by a fatality not unusual to him) has in this very Passage owned that to be the Bishop's Sense, which yet he, in the same Passage, labours to prove is falsely charged upon him by the Committee, and my self. For pray observe; He declares it to be his

Lord-

Lordship's Sence, *That the Favour of God terminates in saving all sincere Persons from Condemnation, and bestowing upon them Rewards proportionate to their several Qualifications and Advancements in real Religion.* By the *Advancements of Men in real Religion*, you are to understand those *virtuous Perfections* which they are endowed with by the *honest and sincere use of that Light or Knowledge they have enjoyed.* These, together with *Sincerity in the Choice of those particular Methods of Religion* which Men have followed, were, as you may remember, *afore declared to be the Rule or Measure according to which God proceeds in proportionating the several Degrees of Favour and Happiness in a Life to come.* Here again they are declared to be the *Rule* and the *only Rule*, in opposition to the *Method of Religion* which is *expresly* excluded from having any thing to do in the Matter. For if it be asked whether God, in *proportionating his Favours or Rewards* hereafter, will not regard the *Goodness* of those *Methods of Religion* which Men have followed, as well as their *Advancements in Real Religion*; Mr. Pyle answers in his own and in the Bishop's Name, *It is certainly clear that the INTRINSICK GOODNESS of one Method above another does not AT ALL come into Consideration.* ALL, says he, are thus far justified by *Vertue of the mere Sincerity of their Choices.* That is to say, If a Man be but *Sincere* in his *Choice of that Method of Religion* which he follows, he and all such shall be so far justified, that whether the *Methods* they have followed be good, or whether they be bad, yet they shall every one of them be Rewarded in a *Measure proportionate to those Degrees of Virtuous or Moral Perfections*, which they have each of them severally attained unto. So that if we put the Case of two Persons equally advanced in

Moral

Moral Honesty ; the one a *Christian*, and the other no *Christian* : The *Christian* will have nothing to plead from his *being a Christian* ; God will not consider, that the one by having *believed* in his *Son*, and having been *Baptized* in his Name, has been taken into a *Special Covenant* with himself, which the other has not ; he will not consider that the one hath pursued that *Method of Religion* which he hath *prescribed*, and whereof he *approves*, and that the other hath followed another *Method* which he hath *not prescribed*, and whereof he doth *not approve* ; all this I say will be no *Motive* with God to *Reward the one better* than he rewards the other ; no, they are both intitled to an *equal Reward* merely in vertue of their *Sincerity*, and because they are *equal Proficients* in *Moral Qualifications*.

This is so clearly the Sense and Tendency of what Mr. Pyle has asserted in this Passage, that I shall venture to tell him before-hand, that if hereafter he shall persist in affirming that it was never in his Thoughts to say, That all sincere Persons have equally a Right and Title to God's Favour, i. e. to equal Degrees of future Happiness or Reward, whatsoever Method of Religion they follow ; he will hereby very plainly shew, either that he does not understand the meaning of what he says himself, or else that he knows not the very Sense of that Question about which we are now disputing. The Question in short is this : Whether the *Method of Religion* which a Man follows considered as such, or considered as it is a *Method of Religion* of this or of that sort, will make any difference as to a Man's *Salvation* or future *Happiness*. And if Mr. Pyle has not here affirmed it as his own and the Bishop's Sense, that it makes no difference, it will be impossible that it ever should be affirmed, seeing it is impossible that any words can be found out by which it can be
more

more clearly and more fully expressed. Nor let it be objected that this Author declares a little after, that it is an *Absurdity to affirm, that the intrinsic Goodness* of one Method of Religion above another *makes no difference* ; For tho' *this*, as these words do really signify, and as they ought to be understood, is indeed a flat contradiction ; yet according as Mr. Pyle understands these words, or in the sense wherein *he* speaks them, they are very reconcileable with that which I now say is his Opinion in the Case. What Mr. Pyle means when he says, that the *intrinsic Goodness* of one Method above another *does* make a difference, we may gather from the Reason he has given why it makes a Difference, which is this, that it is the *intrinsic Goodness* of one Method above another *alone, that qualifies one Man for being a Subject proper and fit for greater future Glories than another.* Qualifies? How? Why not considered merely as it is a Method of Religion intrinsically better than another. For Mr. Pyle, to be sure, would not say, nor indeed do we pretend, that this Consideration is that alone, or the only thing which qualifies for greater Glories. The Sense therefore must be this, that the *intrinsic Goodness* of one Method of Religion above another makes a Difference, because it is this alone that leads to greater moral Perfections, and so qualifies a Man for being a Subject proper and fit for greater Glories. Now if this be all, it will still be true that the intrinsic Goodness *as such* makes no Difference. For if one Method of Religion does therefore only qualify for greater Glories than another, because it leads to greater moral Perfections ; 'tis plain that the reason why one Man is better rewarded than another, must still only be, because he has greater moral Perfections than another ;

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which.

which is to say, that 'tis *not* the *intrinsic Goodness* of the Method *as such*, but the *different improvements and advancements* under that Method, which makes *the Difference*.

Thus then it appears, that according to the account which M. Pyle himself has given us of the matter, there would be no wrong done to the Bishop, if we should say that his *Design* was to teach, that all sincere Persons are entitled to an equal Share or Degree of God's Favour, whatever Method of Religion they follow. And indeed I can see no manner of Reason to doubt it, whether Mr. Pyle will acknowledge it or not. Every one knows that the Discourse about the availableness of *Sincerity* to the Justification of *all Persons* under *different Communions*, was that which gave occasion to that Position of his Lordship, upon which I have made my Remarks; and how is it possible to suppose that his Lordship should *not intend* to include under his *general Rule* that *particular Case* by which his *general Rule* was introduced? Besides, the Bishop himself expressly tells us, (*Preserv.* p. 90.) that a Man's *Title to God's Favour cannot depend upon his actual being or continuing in any particular Method of Religion, but upon his real Sincerity, &c.* And what I pray is this, but to say, that if a Man be but sincere, whatever Method of Religion he follows, his Title to God's Favour will be the same? For if it be said either that some Methods of Religion will not *at all* entitle a Man to God's Favour, or even that *one* Method will entitle a Man to a *greater share* of God's Favour than *another*, it will be ridiculous to say that a Man's Title to God's Favour does *not* depend upon his following any particular Method, *but upon Sincerity*, because upon either of these Suppositions it must in some sort at least depend upon *both*.——But, as I have
often

often said, *not* his Lordship's *Intentions*, but the *true Consequences* of his *Doctrines* are the proper Subject of my Enquiry: And therefore if his general Principle, according to the plain and obvious Construction of it, does imply that all sincere Persons have a Title to an equal Share or Degree of God's Favour, whatever Method of Religion they follow, I have nothing more to do in the matter.

Having in my *Remarks* justified the *Consequences* of his Lordship's Doctrine as stated by the *Committee*, my next Business was to consider his Lordship's *Exceptions* against these *Consequences*; and in doing this I have very plainly shewn in *one* instance, that his Lordship hath very greatly mistaken the Sense of the *Committee*, and in the *rest* that he hath artfully avoided saying that, which, would he have spoken his mind plainly out, he would have found himself under a necessity of acknowledging. Against this part of my Book Mr. *Pyle* has written very particularly; but in such a manner, that 'tis with reluctance I enter upon the examination of it; in which I must be obliged to lay open such Instances of—the Reader will see what, as I am sorry and ashamed should ever be found in a *Christian* and a *Clergyman*. But forasmuch as this is necessary towards my own Defence, who am on the other hand treated as one who has used his Lordship very unfairly; and because it is proper upon another account, that the World should be thoroughly convinced with what sort of *Spirit* this Author writes; I shall therefore submit to the ungrateful Task; and if herein I shall say some things (tho' I will take care to say as few as I can) which are not so much for Mr. *Pyle*'s Advantage, as he himself must needs be sensible; so I hope those about us will do me the justice to consider,

who 'tis that gave the occasion for it. To begin then.

The *first* Consequence mentioned by me as charged upon his Lordship's Doctrine by the Committee, is, that it makes *all Methods of Religion alike, and puts all Communions upon an equal Foot, &c.* His Lordship's Answer to this Charge was set down in his own words, to wit; That *what he had said about private Perswasion related to the Justification of the Man before God, and not to the excellency of one Communion above another, which it leaves just as it finds it, and cannot possibly alter.* Hereupon I observed it as a very manifest Case, that his Lordship *supposed* the meaning of the Committee to be, that he had made all Methods of Religion alike, and put all Communions upon an equal foot, WITH RESPECT TO *to their real natural and intrinsick Excellency*; whereas indeed the Case was quite otherwise; for that the Committee had only said that his Lordship had put all Communions upon an equal Foot, WITHOUT REGARD TO *any intrinsick Goodness*; and had declared in exprefs words, that he had made all Methods alike (not in respect to their *intrinsick Goodness*, but) *in respect to SALVATION or the FAVOUR of GOD.* This is the substance of my Answer, which the Reader may there find pursued at large, and justified in every particular. And what now says Mr. Pyle to this? Why in the first place, and without any Ceremony he charges me with the worst sort of *Imposture* a Writer can be guilty of! (r) *How, says he, are they (the Committee) brought off from this Misrepresentation? Why by trumping upon his Lordship a false Quotation.*— This, Mr. Pyle, is a very heavy Charge, and ac-

(r) Ibid. p. 12.

cording as it appears to be either true or false, it
 will appear that either you or I are the most a-
 bandon'd of Men. 'Tis not fit that the Matter
 should remain long in suspense, and to my great
 Comfort I believe that there is not a Reader up-
 on the Earth, either so very careless, or so void
 of Understanding, as not instantly to see on
 whose Shoulders the Burden will fall. It seems
 this *false Quotation* which I have *trumped* upon
 his Lordship, is a false Quotation of the *Commit-*
tee's words, i. e. I have made the Bishop to have
 quoted the *Committee* falsely. If so, then I must
 have quoted the Bishop falsely. But how is this?
 Why thus; I have *made him say* WITH RESPECT TO,
instead of WITHOUT REGARD TO, i. e. I have made
 the Bishop *cite the Committee as saying* (for this is
 what Mr. Pyle means) *with respect to*, instead of
without regard to. Now, says Mr. Pyle, *I can find*
no such change made by the Bishop in the 113 page
of his Lordship's Answer referred to by Mr. Stebbing.
The word is as it stands in the Committee's Repre-
sentation, WITHOUT, and there is no alteration of it
into WITH. This, Reader, is the whole of the
 Case, by which you perceive that this Charge of
 Mr. Pyle is every whit as *Weak* as it is *Malicious*.
 For the truth is, that I never once quoted the
 Bishop as having *altered the Words* of the *Com-*
mittee, but only as having *mistaken the meaning*
 of those Words. I do indeed say, that *what his*
Lordship REPRESENTS the Committee as saying, is,
that he hath put all Communions upon an equal Foot
 WITH RESPECT TO *their intrinsic Goodness*. But
how has he represented the Committee as saying this?
 Why plainly, not by *altering the Words* of the
Representation, but by what he says in *Answer* to
 them, the Scope and Tenor of which is such as
 evidently shews that he *understood* the Charge of
 the *Committee* to be, that he had put all Communi-

ons upon an equal Foot WITH RESPECT TO *their intrinsic Goodness*. If Mr. Pyle will say that the Bishop did not understand the Charge of the Committee in this Sense, he will make him to prevaricate most egregiously, it being manifest that the whole of what his Lordship hath offered in direct Answer to that Charge, tends only to shew that a Man's *private Perswasion* doth not alter the *essential Nature*, or *intrinsic Worth* of any Communion. Witness what he hath said in the Passage just now mentioned, and by me set down in my *Remarks* ; witness again the famous Instance of *Parliamentary Debates* applied by the Bishop himself, and taken notice of by Mr. Pyle, as applicable to this Case, in which Instance his Lordship says, *That a Man's giving his Vote according to his Perswasion does not AFFECT the NATURE of things ; but that notwithstanding this the same difference still remains between the two sides of any Question ; and the same Excellency of one above another.* All this is nothing to the purpose, if the Committee did not charge him with *destroying the intrinsic Worth and Excellency of one Communion above another*, or (which is all one) of putting all Communions upon an equal Foot, *with respect to their intrinsic Worth and Excellency* ; and if his Lordship did not *understand* the Charge of the Committee in this Sense, I say that he has *prevaricated* as well as argued impertinently. But the Charge of the Committee is, that he hath put all Communions upon an equal Foot, *without regard to any intrinsic Goodness*, and consequently his Lordship must have mistaken the meaning of this Charge, unless to put all Communions upon an equal Foot *without regard to any intrinsic Goodness* ; and to put all Communions upon an equal Foot *with respect to their intrinsic Goodness*, be one and the same thing. Do then these

two

two different Expressions signify the same thing, or do they not? Why yes! Mr. Pyle has the Hardiness to maintain that they do! For having given over his *Trumping* (Conscious, without doubt, that it would never carry him through) he presently lays in for an *After-game*; and as if it were on purpose to let us know that he was resolved to stick at nothing, says, *And yet at last in which soever of the two ways you express it, I can for my part see no possible difference in the Sense as to the present Argument. For—*now comes the Reason, such a one as it is; *he that is said to put all Communions upon the Level, WITHOUT REGARD TO any intrinsick Goodness, may mean no more than this; that intrinsick Goodness does not at all come into the consideration of that Relation, wherein 'tis affirmed they are equal; and can mean no less than that 'twere the same thing as to such Relation, whether there were any intrinsick Goodness of one above the other. And he that is said to put all Communions upon an equal Foot, WITH RESPECT TO intrinsick Goodness, cannot be said to mean any otherwise than that intrinsick Goodness can make no difference as to THAT, wherein he affirms they are upon an equal Foot, which my Logick tells me, are one and the same thing.—*Now Mr. Pyle is crept into the dark, and thinks himself as safe as may be. But alas! the Truth is visible amidst all this Obscurity; even *Reams of Nonsense* will not be able to deface it. The difference manifestly is as I have stated it in my *Remarks*, viz. That whereas to say, that all Communions are upon an equal Foot, *with respect to their intrinsick Goodness*, is to say that the *intrinsick Goodness* of all Communions is the same, or that there is no difference between the *intrinsick Goodness* of one Communion, and the *intrinsick Goodness* of another; to say that
all

all Communion^s are put upon an equal Foot, without regard to any *intrinsic Goodness*, on the contrary supposes that there is a difference between the *intrinsic Goodness* of one Communion, and the *intrinsic Goodness* of another, and is only to affirm that with respect to some thing else (which in the present Case is *Salvation* or the *Favour of God*) all Communion^s are put upon an equal Foot, without regarding or considering that Difference. This is the Truth of the Case; and if Mr. Pyle cannot see it, it will be the Business of his *Physician* to try to help him, and not mine. But it is plain that he himself cannot make any thing else of it. For, pray attend a little; He says in the Passage just now set down, that to affirm that all Communion^s are put upon an equal Foot, or upon the Level, WITHOUT REGARD TO ANY *intrinsic Goodness*, means neither more nor less than this, viz. That it is made to be the same thing as to that Respect or Relation, wherein 'tis affirmed that they are Equal, or upon the Level, whether there were any *intrinsic Goodness* of one above another or no. Now since that Respect or Relation in which his Lordship is charged by the Committee, to have put all Communion^s upon an equal Foot, is as I have shewn, and as Mr. Pyle himself grants in the very next Page, *Salvation*, and the *Favour of God*; 'tis evident then that according to Mr. Pyle's own Account, the meaning of the Charge of the Committee is neither more nor less than this, viz. That according to his Lordship it is the same thing as to *Salvation*, and the *Favour of God*, whether there were any *intrinsic Goodness* of one Communion above another or no; which is the very thing that I say was meant by the Committee. Well then; is there no difference between saying this, and saying that all Communion^s are upon an equal Foot WITH RESPECT TO their *intrinsic Goodness*?

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Why no; Mr. Pyle's Logick tells him that they are one and the same thing. For it seems he who says this cannot mean any otherwise than that *intrinsic Goodness*, can make no difference as to THAT, wherein he affirms they are upon an equal Foot. Cannot mean any otherwise! But I say, Sir, that if he means to speak Sense, he cannot but mean otherwise; for the *Intrinsic Goodness* is now it self that very *Respect* or *Relation* in which all Communion are affirmed to be upon an equal Foot, and consequently the *Intrinsic Goodness* cannot be said to make no difference as to that in which they are affirmed to be upon an equal Foot. For this were to say that the *Intrinsic Goodness* of any Communion can make no Difference as to the *Intrinsic Goodness* of any Communion, which how agreeable, Sir, soever it may be to your Logick, I am sure is not agreeable to common Sense. — But I shall dispute no longer upon the Difference of these two Expressions, which indeed is so plain of it self, that it is not possible by any thing that can be said to make it plainer. We may even grant to Mr. Pyle that they are the same, and with pleasure observe, how unfortunately he has changed Sides, and left the Bishop and himself in the Lurch. The Committee had charged his Lordship with putting all Communion upon an equal Foot, without Regard to any *Intrinsic Goodness*. Now thus much is certain, that his Lordship understood, and all along argued against this as a Charge that he had destroyed all *Intrinsic Excellency* between one Communion and another. If you doubt of this, you may have Mr. Pyle's own Word for it. (s) One cannot, says he, be accused of Partiality, in imagining their

(s) Ibid. p. 14.

(the Committee's) *real Intention was to accuse my Lord of destroying all Internal Excellency, or Truth of one Religion above another, in the foregoing Charge, of putting all Religion upon an equal Foot.* Be not too positive, Sir, you'll be convicted of *Partiality*, and something else, before you are aware of it. For let me ask you; Does the Charge of the Committee imply that the Bishop had destroyed all *Internal Excellency, or Truth of one Religion or Communion above another*? No, you your self say (as I have shown just now) that the meaning of the Charge of the Committee is neither more nor less than this, *viz. That according to his Lordship, it is the same thing as to Salvation and the Favour of God, WHETHER THERE WERE any Intrinsic Goodness of one Communion above another, and you say right; for to say that all Communions are put upon an equal Foot, without Regard to any Intrinsic Goodness, especially if you add, or whether they be right or wrong (which are the Words of the Representation) is so far from implying that all Intrinsic Goodness is destroyed, that it implies the direct contrary, as has already been observed. But it seems if the Committee had said that the Bishop had put all Communions upon an equal Foot, with Respect to their Intrinsic Goodness, even this would not have done the Business; for there is no difference you say between these two Expressions, and you tell us expressly, that (t) NEITHER of them conclude any absolute DESTRUCTION of the Intrinsic Goodness of one Communion above another, as I think one of them does. I do still think, Sir, that one of them does; but that is not now the Point between us. You say that nei-*

(t) Ibid. p. 12.

ther of them does, and therefore in your Account That used by the Committee, which is one of them, does not. But for God's sake, Sir, how can you clear either the Bishop or your self from Injustice and Impertinence in laying it at the Committee's Door, that they have charged him with DESTROYING all Internal Excellency, or Truth of one Communion above another, when as your self say their Words imply no such thing! — Here, Sir, I leave you to answer for your self; and your Answer is this, That IF EITHER of these Expressions conclude an absolute DESTRUCTION of the Intrinsic Goodness of one Communion above another, that of the Committee bids the fairest for it of the two; WITHOUT REGARD TO any Intrinsic Goodness, LOOKING MUCH MORE LIKE a denying all Intrinsic Goodness, than the other manner of expressing it does. Which if it does not more than look like a Determination in you to stick fast to your Cause, either with or against Reason, I shall be content to leave to every impartial Reader to consider.

Mr. Pyle having managed this Point so unsuccessfully, as you have now seen, a Silent Retreat might have well become him. However he sets a good Face on the Matter, and crys out with the Air of a Conqueror, Enough in all Reason upon a poor Quibble. After this he undertakes to (u) deal with another Quibble, which, if it be possible, he says, is inferior to the former. Now the Matter in short is this; That whereas the Committee had objected against his Lordship, that in following any particular Communion he had referred every Man to his own PRIVATE JUDGMENT, as that which will justify even the WORST Choice he can

(u) Ibid. p. 14.

make; and whereas his Lordship had alledged that, *CONTRARY to this Representation, he had never taught that the Sincerity of a Man's private Judgment will justify him in any but the BEST Choice he can make:* My Answer is, That herein his Lordship hath not denyed any thing which the Committee hath affirmed; that in the Sense of the Committee that may be the *worst Choice*, which in the Sense of his Lordship is still the *BEST Choice*; and consequently that his Lordship, instead of removing this Charge, has only evaded it. I am not in the least displeased to hear Mr. Pyle calling this Answer a *Quibble*; for I am by this time so well used to him, that wherever I find this Word, *there* I conclude that I shall certainly meet with something or other which he knows not how to deal with. Whether this be not the Case here, will appear upon Tryal. Mr. Pyle, after his usual way, has said a great deal upon this Head which might very well have been spared; but every one sees that the whole Strength of the Debate must lye in those Passages, where he has gone about to explain what the Committee may be supposed to have meant by *justifying a Man in the worst Choice he can make* (for concerning the Bishop's Sense of *justifying in the BEST CHOICE*, we have no difference) and consequently that these Passages contain the whole of what is necessary to be considered. Hear him then. *What can be the obvious intended meaning of these Words, JUSTIFY THE WORST CHOICE, but either justifying or making it equally Intrinsically Good, with that which is Intrinsically, or in it self the best Choice, i. e. making that to be in it self true, which is in it self false; or else that it will justify him in ANY Choice, how BADLY, INCONSIDERATELY and RASHLY soever made?* This

I say, as 'tis worded by the Committee, does so naturally carry one of these Senses that—Yes, Mr. Pyle; so naturally, that it cannot possibly carry either of them, unless it be to your self, who can see any Sense in Words that you have a mind to. When the Committee say that a Man's Private Judgment will justify, they mean (what only they can in sound Sense be supposed to mean) that it will justify THE MAN, i. e. it will justify him before God. And thus his Lordship himself understood them. I am charged (says he, in his Answer to the Representation) with maintaining that the MAN'S Private Judgment will justify HIM IN the worst Choice he can make, i. e. it will justify the Man, although the Choice which he makes be the worst. So that the word Justify relating not to the Choice, but to the Man who makes that Choice; 'tis ridiculous in you to pretend that the meaning of the Committee might be to say, that his Lordship had made the worst Choice equally Intrinsically Good, with that which is Intrinsically the best Choice, which indeed is a very manifest Contradiction. But may not the meaning of these Words be, that a Man's Private Judgment will justify him in any Choice, however badly, inconsiderately, and rashly made? Mr. Pyle thinks it may, and this in effect is what the Bishop has supposed to be the Sense of the Committee: But I may venture to leave it to any impartial Man to consider, whether it be possible to suppose that the Committee intended any such Charge as this, when it is so notoriously evident that the words themselves will not allow of it. I say it again (for I can say nothing plainer) that in common Computation the Goodness or Badness of a Man's Choice is measured by the real intrinsic value of the thing he chuses; so that if a Man chuses that which is really and intrinsically the worst,

worst, let it be done never so *carefully*, it will still be the *worst Choice* ; as on the other hand, if he chuses that which is *really* and *intrinsically* the *best*, let it be done never so *carelessly*, it will be the *best Choice*. In the Instance that I made use of to illustrate this by, the Case was so clear that Mr. Pyle could not deny it. Who makes the *best Choice* ? He that chuses *Silver*, or he that chuses *Gold* ? Mr. Pyle owns, he that chuses the *latter*. And who makes the *worst Choice* ? He who chuses the *Communion* of the *Papists*, or he who chuses the *Communion* of the *Protestants* ? Does not he who chuses the *Communion* of the *Papists* ? Why no (according to the Bishop and Mr. Pyle) not unless he chuses it *Rashly* and *Inconsiderately*. But I say, *yes* ; for this Consideration has no place in the *former* Instance, and therefore it can have none in the *latter*. O but says Mr. Pyle, (w) This is drawing *Parallels* between things the most *unparallel* of any things in *Nature* ; it is drawing down the *Excellency* of *Moral Vertue*, to the *Level* of that which is in *Gold* and *Silver* ; and this he is pleased to observe as an Instance of my *little Wit*, and great *Inattention* ! Mr. Pyle is welcome to be as *Complaisant* as he pleases ; but let him not think that this odious *Imputation* upon me will pass for an *Answer*. For it is plain to any one who has but *Eyes* in his *Head*, that the *Comparison* here made is not between the *Excellency* of *Moral Vertue*, and the *Excellency* of *Gold* and *Silver* ; but between the *Use* and *Signification* of these words, the *Best*, or the *worst Choice*, when applied to the one, and when applied to the other. What I say, and what Mr. Pyle allows, is, that in chusing *Gold* or

(w) Ibid p. 16.

Silver, he is always said to make the *worst Choice*; who chuses the *worst Metal*; whether he chuses it *rashly*, or *not rashly*. In like manner in chusing *Communion*; Does not he make the *worst Choice*, who chuses the *worst Communion*, whether *Rashly*, or *not Rashly*? I say, he *does*; the Bishop and Mr. Pyle say he *does not*. But let either of them assign a Reason for it when they can.

I know not how to forgive my self, Reader, that I have detained you so long upon such mere *Trifles*. But I had a mind to show you how obstinately this Author insists upon *Trifles*, when he wants something material to say. The Sense of the *Committee* is as clear as the Light, *viz.* That if a Man chuses the *worst Communion possible*, the Sincerity of his private Judgment will justify him. Now since this is the very Doctrine of his Lordship, what can be more plain than that he *owns* that which they have *really charged* him with, and *denys* only that which they have *not*. To argue as Mr. Pyle does, that this cannot be the Sense of the *Committee*, because (x) it cannot be *truly affirmed* that the Sincerity of a Man's private Judgment will *not* justify him in his Choice, is ridiculous; at least *in him*. For he, I suppose, is none of those who pretend that *all* that the *Committee* have affirmed is *true*. Besides, if it be rightly understood, I think it *may be* truly affirmed, that the Sincerity of a Man's private Judgment will *not* justify him in a *bad Choice*. For if you take *Justification* in a *Gospel Sense* (and in that Sense surely it ought to be taken in this Controversy) *i. e.* as it signifies Justification according to the *Terms and Conditions* laid down in the

(x) Ibid. p. 15.

Gospel ; mere Sincerity will not then justify him at all. And take it how you will, it will not (as the Committee express themselves a few Lines after) wholly justify him, i. e. it will not so far justify him, as that it shall be *the same thing* to him as if he had made the *best Choice*.—But this will be more properly spoken to in another place ; and therefore I shall now conclude this Point with begging leave to recall one thing which I have said in my *Remarks* under this Head. I there lay it down in effect, that according to the Bishop's Notion of *Best* and *Worst*, he must have supposed that by the *worst Choice* the Committee meant the Choice of that which appears to a Man's own Judgment to be the *worst* ; in which Supposition, I say, there is no Sense. Here Mr. Pyle is pleased to laugh ; as if I had resolved all into the good Nature and Opinion of the Friends on both sides, and he may laugh on, if he pleases ; for I only supposed that the Committee were Masters of just so much common Sense, as to know the difference between two *Contradictories*, and consequently that since in the Case of chusing Communion, his Lordship had so constantly, and so plainly taught, that a Man ought to chuse that which he *thinks* to be *the best* ; it could never be their Intention to charge him with saying, that he ought to chuse that which he *thinks* to be *the worst*. This I say is all that I supposed in that Argument ; and if Mr. Pyle will not grant me this, his good Nature will, I believe, be the least thing in Question. But the Observation which Mr. Pyle might have made, and which he ought to have made, is this, That since according to the Bishop a Man does then and then only make the *best Choice*, when he chuses that which upon the strictest and most impartial Enquiry appears to him to be the best, there was therefore, in order

der to make the Charge of the Committee to *contradict* what his Lordship *says* he maintains, no need to suppose any thing more than this, *viz.* That by the *worst Choice* the Committee meant the Choice of that, which tho' indeed it *appears* to be the *best*, yet it appears so only for want of *sufficient Examination*. Whether the Committee had Reason to suspect that this was his Lordship's Doctrine, or whether they had not, is another Question. But that they intended not in this place to *charge* him with this Doctrine, is very plain, because, as I have, I hope, sufficiently shown, the word *Worst* (upon which the whole Stress of the Charge lyes) according to the Rule of Speaking in all like Cases, relates *not* to the *Examination* which is *previous* to a Man's Choice, but *wholly* and *solely* to the *nature*, and *real value* of the *thing* he *chuses*.

From what I have now observed concerning my own Mistake, Mr. Pyle may learn that I am not so hard to be perswaded to *own my self in the Wrong*, as he somewhere seems to suppose. He may also find that I am not yet reduced to such Streights, but that I can afford to lend him a helping Hand (if it be to give him a just Advantage) even against my self. Whether Mr. Pyle will thank me for this, or whether he will not, I am willing to leave entirely to his Discretion; tho' I fancy beforehand that he will not be very well pleased to find himself under a *Mischance*, which is usually look'd upon either as a sign of *great Haste*, or *very little Judgment*; I mean the unhappiness of *spying many Faults* where there are *none*, and of *overlooking* them where *they are*.

To proceed, the next *Consequence* mentioned by me as charged upon his Lordship by the Committee, is, That he hath render'd all Church Com-

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munion unnecessary in order to entitle Men to the Favour of God. Against this his Lordship has excepted nothing but this, that this *latter* part of the Charge is inconsistent with the *former*, wherein it is declared to be the Consequence of his Lordship's Doctrine, that a Man's Private Judgment *will justify him, even in the worst Choice he can make*; which, says his Lordship, *supposes that I have made Communion with some Church or other necessary.* This I look'd upon to be an extraordinary Instance of his Lordship's *Artful and Evasive* way of Writing; for it being (as I have observed) so manifestly consistent, to say that a Man's Private Judgment will justify him if he chuses the *Worst* Communion; and also that it will justify him if he chuses *no* Communion; it being likewise so natural an Inference, that if a Man's Private Judgment will justify him in chusing *no* Communion, it will justify him in chusing *any* Communion: This I say, being so clearly the Case, I thought it impossible that his Lordship should lay hold of so weak a Pretence as this, unless it were that otherwise he must have been forced to do, what yet he was resolved *not* to do, that is, to make a plain acknowledgment of the thing laid to his Charge. Upon this Mr. Pyle has given us an Harrangue of about two Pages long; by which, if his Meaning was to justify the Bishop against the Committee, he is surely the most unfortunate Advocate that ever took Cause in Hand, for he has given him up as *contentedly* as may be. He propounds my Question fairly enough, thus; *Where and how is it supposed that his Lordship hath made Communion with some Church or other necessary?* And now, pray mark his Answer, (y) It

(y) *It (i. e. Communion with some Church or other) is NOT nor need be any where SUPPOSED as absolutely or indispensably necessary to ALL Men under ALL Circumstances.*—'Tis needless to repeat any thing farther; for here is a plain Concession, that according to his Lordship, the joyning in Communion with ANY Church may NOT, to SOME Persons under SOME Circumstances, be NECESSARY to entitle them to God's Favour. Now who these Persons, and what these Circumstances are, you will understand from his Answer to another Question of mine, which follows presently after. *May not the same Person, (i. e. the same Person who affirms that the Sincerity of a Man's Private Judgment will justify him if he chuses the worst Communion; may nor, say I, the same Person) affirm also very consistently, that the same Sincerity will likewise justify him if he chuses none at all?* YES, says Mr. Pyle, MOST CERTAINLY, if he finds none that his Conscience and Sincere Judgment will suffer him to esteem fit to be joyned with; which was the only possible Case wherein the Bishop can be concluded to have justified such a Man. The only possible Case, do you say, Sir? I fancy not. But supposing that it were, I think you have here very fully acknowledged the Charge of the Committee to be just. For when the Committee say, that his Lordship hath rendered all Church Communion unnecessary to entitle Men to the Favour of God, their meaning is not, that he has made it (z) in all Cases, and to every Man absolutely and equally unnecessary, as you very extravagantly suppose; but that he has made it necessary no further than a Man's Private Perswasion leads him

(y) Ibid. p. 17, 18. (z) Ibid. p. 18.

to *think* it necessary; so that if his Private Judgment leads him to think it *not* necessary to joyn himself in any Communion, and accordingly he *does not* joyn himself to any Communion, his Title to God's Favour shall be *the same* as if he did. This is plainly the Case, as will appear by considering both parts of the Sentence together. *All Church Communion is render'd unnecessary to Entitle Men to God's Favour; and every Man is referred in these Cases to his Private Judgment, as that which will justify the worst Choice he can make. All Church Communion is rendered unnecessary.—* How so? Why by referring every Man to his Private Judgment, which as it will justify him, if he chuses the *worst* Communion, so consequently it will also justify him if he chuses *none at all*. A Man's Private Judgment is supposed to direct him in both Cases, and consequently Church Communion is not here supposed to be made unnecessary any farther than according to that Private Judgment it appears to be unnecessary. Now, Sir, Forasmuch as you have laid it down, as your own and the Bishop's Opinion, that a Man's Private Perswasion will Justify him, or Entitle him to God's Favour, tho' he chuses *no* Communion, provided, or upon this Condition that his Conscience will not suffer him to think, that there are any *fit* to be joyned with; by this, I say, you have plainly given up the thing in Question. For if this be the Case, 'tis manifest that there can be no necessary Connexion between a Man's *joyning himself to any Communion*, and his being *Entitled to God's Favour*; No; his Title to God's Favour depends upon his *Private Perswasion*, and upon *nothing else*. Now if a Man's Title to God's Favour depends *solely* upon his Private Perswasion, it will follow, that the

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joyning in any Communion cannot be necessary in order to the Entitling him to God's Favour, any farther than a Man's Private Perswasion leads him to think it necessary, which, I say, is the very Consequence charged upon his Lordship by the Committee. And whereas you say, that the only possible Case wherein the Bishop can be concluded to have justified a Man in chusing no Communion at all, is when his Conscience will not suffer him to esteem any fit to be joyned with; in this I think you are widely mistaken. For a Man may chuse to joyn in no Communion, as well because he thinks it not necessary to joyn in any, as because he thinks it not fitting. That his Private Judgment will justify him in the latter Case, you grant; and why it should not as well justify him in the former, you may be pleased to take your own Time to consider.

Whether, or in what Sense, a Man's Private Perswasion will Entitle him to God's Favour, tho' he joyns himself to no Communion of Christians, is a Subject proper to be considered in another place. The question at present only is, whether his Lordship is rightly charged with this Consequence? which since he is now acknowledged to be, I think I need not be afraid to say again, as I once before said in my Remarks, (p. 11.) That according to his Lordship, a Man who joyns himself with no Society of Christians, who frequents no Place of Publick Worship, who partakes of no Sacraments, may yet have a Title to God's Favour, and that in the same Degree with him who sincerely keeps the whole Law. I observed there indeed, that his Lordship had said one thing, which, were it true, would take off this Objection: But then I observed likewise, that it would make his whole Doctrine about Sincerity insignificant.

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(a) *Hard*, says Mr. Pyle, that the *Objection* should be removed, and yet the *Doctrine* be destroyed ! An *Observation* so very *thin* and *slippery*, that he no sooner lays hold of it than he lets it go again, and comes to the *Bishop's Supposition*, which I said was this ; That those who sincerely believe in Christ, will be led by their *Regard* to him to the *Profession* of that *Truth*, and to the outward *Use* of ALL the MEANS which he appointed, i.e. as I have explained it, they will be led by their *Regard* to Christ, to believe and do as the *Gospel* directs them. This I farther confirmed from another *Passage*, in which his *Lordship* had declared, that it CANNOT BE SUPPOSED, that a Man who sincerely is Subject to Jesus Christ alone in the great *Affair* of *Salvation*, will not follow Jesus Christ's *Directions*, and joyn in the *Worship* of God with other Men, or will not be induced to follow ALL his Master's *INJUNCTIONS*. This is his *Lordship's Supposition*, which afterwards he applies particularly to the *Case* of the *Sacraments* ; and, which I say, if it be true (which I have shewn it not to be) takes off the *Objection*. For if the only thing which can *Entitle* a Man to God's *Favour*, notwithstanding he joyns himself to no *Communion* of Christians, be his *Sincerity* ; and if it cannot be supposed, that a Man who is *Sincere*, may refuse to joyn himself to any *Communion* of Christians. because all who are sincere must be led to follow all the *Injunctions*, or *Appointments* of Christ : Then indeed, it will not follow from any thing that his *Lordship* hath said, That a Man who joyns in no *Communion*, or even in a *wrong Communion*,

(a) Ibid. p. 19.

will have as good a Title to God's Favour, as he who joyns in a *Right* one. But then on the other hand, his Lordship will be made to have said a great deal to very little Purpose. For how idle is it, to tell us, that *Sincerity* will justify a Man *if he be* in an Error, *i. e.* if he does not follow all Christ's Injunctions, if it be true, that *Sincerity cannot be supposed, unless a Man does follow all Christ's Injunctions?*

This is the State of the Case; and now let us attend a little upon Mr. Pyle, and see how he has endeavoured to bring the Bishop off. He grants then, that *as I have quoted these two Expressions (Sentences, I suppose he would have said) and remarked upon them, a Reader would indeed naturally think, his Lordship had not only supposed, but affirmed, that ALL sincere Christians—must of course be led to—an uniform Reception of ALL the Doctrines, and appointed Means of Christ, as they were designed to be understood in the Gospel Writings.* Which Words I no sooner read, than I began vehemently to suspect that here was more *Trumping* at hand; and so indeed it proved. For in the next Page he tells me, that this is a gross *Misrepresentation*. That *all this Hacking, and Hewing down of the Bishop's Principle, is merely in my own Brain, by either designedly, or very unfortunately taking a thing to be affirmed by one, which was only by Consequence, and on bare Supposition the Affirmation of the other.* Certainly this Gentleman cares not what he says! For tho' I do not pretend to make either Sense *Grammar* of this Sentence, yet the meaning of it (if Mr. Pyle's Intention was to contradict me) must be this. That whereas I have set it down as a *Supposition*, or an *Affertion* (for you may call it which you please) of the Bishop's, that all sincere Christians *will*, and *must*, by their Regard

gard to Christ beled to follow *all* his *Injuncti-
ons* ; this is *NOT* the *Bishop's* Supposition, *BUT* the
Committee's, i. e. (I suppose) that the Bishop
spoke this, not as his own, but as the Committee's
Supposition ; for every one sees that the Passages
upon which I ground this Observation, are quo-
ted, not out of the *Representation*, but out of the
Bishop's Answer. Now if this be indeed the Case,
I will be contented to be thought either as *De-
signing*, or as *unfortunate* a Man as Mr. Pyle is
disposed to think me to be ; but surely it is im-
possible that any thing can be more notoriously
false ! For, pray observe. The Bishop, as I said
in my *Remarks*, had defined the Church to be the
Number of Men, whether *small* or *great*, *dispersed*,
or *united*, who truly and sincerely are *Subjects* to Je-
sus Christ alone as their *Lawgiver* and *Judge*, &c.
The Committee upon this, charged him with ha-
ving contradicted the 19th *Article* of our Church,
in which it is defined to be a *Congregation* of
faithful Men, in which the *pure Word* of God is
Preached, and the *Sacraments* duly *Administred*, &c.
The Bishop replies, that whereas the *Article* de-
fines the *visible* Church of Christ, he had defi-
ned the *Invisible* one ; acknowledging at the same,
that if in his *Definition* of this latter, it could be
proved that any thing was contained which con-
tradicted that *Definition* which the *Article* has
given of the former, it would be his part to an-
swer for it. His *Business* therefore was to show
that there was *no such* Contradiction ; and thus
he attempts it. Can it be thought by this *Learned*
Body, that a Man's being of the *Invisible* Church, is
inconsistent with his *joyning* himself with any *Visible*
Church ? That a Man who sincerely is *Subject* to Je-
sus Christ alone, in the great *Affair* of *Salvation*,
WILL NOT follow Jesus Christ's *Directions*, and joyn
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in the Worship of God with other Men; or will not be induced to follow ALL his Master's Injunctions? If therefore the main and principal Foundation of what I have taught; the Description which I have given of the Church, do not either in Words, or in Consequence contradict the Article of our Church here mentioned, it is impossible to suppose, that I should intend any of my Observations upon this Subject, by way of Disparagement, &c. Answ. to the Repres. Chap. 1. Sect. 14. p. 79.

Thus argues the Bishop; whether Pertinently, or not Pertinently, it matters not now to enquire. That which at present lies before us, is this, and only this, whether it be *his Lordship's*, or the *Committee's* Supposition, that a Man who is sincerely Subject to Jesus Christ, *will, and must* be led to follow *all* Jesus Christ's Injunctions? and I think, for my part, that the Case is as clear as can be. For, 1. This Question, CAN IT BE supposed by this Learned Body amounts in plain and necessary Construction to a positive Assertion, that IT CANNOT BE supposed by this Learned Body. Consequently his Lordship does not in these words refer to any thing, which *had been* supposed by the Committee; he only tells them what they ought, or ought not to suppose. 2. One of those things which the Bishop says the Committee CANNOT suppose, is, that a Man who is a sincere Subject of Jesus Christ, WILL NOT be induced to follow ALL his Injunctions. Now if the Committee cannot suppose this, the Reason must be, because in the nature of the thing IT CANNOT BE supposed; for if it MAY at all be supposed, then the Committee may suppose it, unless you think that the Committee are under an Obligation to suppose nothing but what the Bishop has a mind to. This then is a plain Declaration on the Bishop's side, that it MUST BE supposed that EVERY sincere Subject of Jesus Christ WILL be

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led to follow ALL Jesus Christ's Injunctions; which will, if it be possible, be the more manifest from what follows in the next Section. He there declares once more (in Answer to the Committee, who had blamed him for leaving out *Preaching the Word, and Administring the Sacraments* in his Definition of the Church) that he was not speaking of a *Visible Church*, but of the *Invisible Church, made up of such as sincerely believe in Christ*, and BY CONSEQUENCE WILL BE LED by their Regard to him, both to the Profession of that Faith, and to the outward Use of ALL the Means which he has appointed. Is not this a plain Declaration in the Bishop's Name, that ALL sincere Believers WILL be led, in Vertue of their Sincerity merely, to the Use of ALL the Means appointed by Christ? If you doubt, read the next Words: *To make such Objections as these, is to make Objections that have no Weight in them, unless they who make them suppose, that by taking Christ for their Lawgiver and King, Men will not be led by him and his own Directions, to the TWO SACRAMENTS, and to the Use of his own APPOINTMENTS: A SUPPOSITION which I SHALL TAKE CARE never to be guilty of.* Mr. Pyle in relating this Passage, has intirely dropt these last words, *a Supposition which I shall take care, &c. thro' Bashfulness*, it may be, not caring to be stared so full in the Face. For in the very next line he was to call upon his Friend, to see whose this Supposition was, that is, to destroy his Lordship's darling Scheme; meaning to bid him look, if it was not the Committee's; which would have been a very bold Challenge, if these last Words had been set down, which do so manifestly show it to be the Bishop's. Indeed, that it should be a Supposition of the Committee, that every sincere Man, will, in Vertue of his Sincerity only, be led to follow ALL Christ's Injunctions, is a Conceit

ceit every whit as extravagant, as the Reason which appears to have given birth to this Observation, is Absurd and Ridiculous. Mr. Pyle having stated the Committee's Objection, sets down the Bishop's Answer, thus; *That there could be no Inconsistency between the two Definitions, unless it could be supposed* BY THAT LEARNED BODY (for, adds he, 'twas THEIRS, not my LORD'S Supposition) *That a Man who is sincerely Subject to Jesus Christ, will NOT follow, &c.* Judge now, Reader, if this which I am going to tell you was not the Case. Mr. Pyle had very happily found out, that these words, *Supposed, by, that, Learned, Body,* stood close together in the Bishop's Book. Presently up starts a Thought in his Head, that his Lordship here was not declaring any thing *as his own Supposition,* but only mentioning something which had been supposed by the Committee. Now if this should happen to be that very *Supposition* which I had charged upon his Lordship, as *Destructive of his darling Scheme,* what a clever Discovery would this be! What Triumphs might be raised! ——— Well, thus then it must be; and accordingly no sooner had he made an end of setting down the Bishop's Answer, but out it comes at a Venture, that this *Destruction* is all *Imaginary,* all *Framed in my own Brain,* by making that to be a *Supposition of the one,* which in Truth was a *Supposition of the other.* But as hasty Projects seldom prosper, especially where the Intention is not good, so it hath happen'd even in this Case; for if any Regard is to be paid to Mr. Pyle's own Words, this *Supposition,* which he says was theirs (the Committee's) and not *his Lordship's,* is not *that Supposition* which I have charged upon his Lordship, and which I say destroys his

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darling Scheme, but the direct contrary to it. *That Supposition* which I have charged upon his Lordship, is, (as you have seen over and over) *that a sincere Subject of Jesus Christ will be led to follow all Jesus Christ's Injunctions.* Whereas the Supposition which Mr. Pyle says is *the Committee's*, and not *his Lordship's*, is (as you'll perceive by reading the Passage) *not that a sincere Subject of Jesus Christ will be led, but that he will not be led to follow all Jesus Christ's Injunctions.* Mr. Pyle, on account of some gross and enormous Mistakes, which, as he fancies, I have committed, has often told me of my **BLUNDERS**, and Complemented me with a Variety of such Terms, as I must own are by much *too good* to be returned him back again. But this I do assure him, that as great a *Blunderer* as I am, I have still such a Sense of what is *Just and Decent*, that I will never again trouble the World with my *Writings*, when once the Case comes to be so bad with me, that I cannot see *to what* a plain Sentence in any Author *refers*, or at least am not able to know the difference between a *Negative* and an *Affirmative*.

But to proceed ; It appearing so plainly to be *his Lordship's Supposition*, *that a sincere Subject of Jesus Christ will be led by his Regard to Christ, to the Profession of that Faith, and to the outward Use of ALL the Means which he appointed ; or be induced to follow ALL his Master's Injunctions ;* our next enquiry must be, what may be *the Sense* of this Supposition. The Sense which I have put upon it, is very well expressed by Mr. Pyle, viz. *That ALL sincere Christians must of course be led to an uniform Reception of ALL the Doctrines and appointed Means of Christ, as they were designed to be understood in the Gospel.* Now to this he says,

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1. That it is a false and a groundless Supposition. By which, if he means that the Supposition it self, when understood in this Sense, is false and groundless, I agree with him. He says, 2. That it is the Result of nothing but of a most unfair Representation of the Bishop's Words; by which, if he means that my putting this Sense upon the Bishop's Supposition, is the Result of nothing but of a most unfair Representation of the Bishop's Words, I shall dispute it with him. Let us hear then how Mr. Pyle interprets these Words. *Sincere Believers in Christ will be led to that Faith, and to all the Means which he has appointed. That is, says he, They will be led to the Profession of all that Faith, and to the Use of all those Means which their honest Endeavours will enable them to attain to—Again; They will follow all Christ's Directions, i. e. to the best of their Knowledge.—And joyn in the Worship of God with other Men, i. e. with all, or any Men whom they judge to Worship God aright, and with none any farther.* This Mr. Pyle says is the candid Sense, and natural Intention of these Expressions; and that so plainly, that (had not I, it seems, by my Example shown the contrary) he should verily have thought that ill Nature it self could have hardly gone so far as to deny it. Concerning Mr. Pyle's good Nature I have nothing to say. But I shall mightily question his good Sense, if he can in earnest believe that his Lordship's Meaning was as he has now described it to be. For, 1. He (Mr. Pyle) himself has given us another Sense of these Expressions, which is not at all agreeable with this. The Committee, says the Bishop, cannot suppose that a Man who is a sincere Subject of Jesus Christ, will not (i. e. says Mr. Pyle, CANNOT CONSISTENTLY be supposed to) follow

follow all his Injunctions. Again, *The Committee cannot suppose, that by taking Christ for their Law-giver, and King, Men WILL NOT (i. e. says he, CANNOT CONSISTENTLY) be led to the use of his own Appointments, and particularly to the Sacraments.* In both these Instances you see Mr. Pyle interprets the words WILL NOT, by CANNOT CONSISTENTLY, that is, WILL is made to signify MAY, or CAN ; and so by the same Rule *Black* may be made to signify *White ; Red, Yellow ; any thing, every thing.* Thus, I say, may the Sense of Words be turned toply turvy, *i. e.* when Mr. Pyle thinks so fit, and it will suit with his Purpose ; for I believe, were I to give him a Note under my Hand, wherein I promised that I would pay him a *Hundred Pounds* upon Demand, he would hardly be so good natured as to think my Meaning to be no more than, that I might consistently do it.—But this by the way. That which I principally observe here is this, That this Interpretation and the former, cannot both of them be right. For if by *will not*, his Lordship means *cannot consistently*, then by following all Christ's Injunctions or Appointments, he could not mean barely following them (as Mr. Pyle supposes) according to the best of his Judgment, or Abilities ; because there can be no doubt, but that a sincere Man may consistently with his Sincerity be led to follow Christ's Appointments, not only according to the best of his Judgment, but actually, or according to that Sense wherein they are set down, and designed to be understood in the Gospel. To say the Truth, Sincerity in a Christian (according to his Lordship, at least) implies in the very Notion of it the following all the Injunctions, or Appointments of Christ, according to the best of a Man's Abilities. To say there-

therefore that a sincere Subject of Jesus Christ will, i. e. *consistently* may follow all the Injunctions or Appointments of Christ, according to the best of his Abilities, is only to say, that a sincere Christian *may consistently* be a sincere Christian; a Discovery, which how worthy soever it may be of Mr. Pyle, is such as I am sure his Lordship would be heartily ashamed of. For this Reason 2. It could not be his Lordship's Intention to say, that a sincere Subject of Jesus Christ WILL follow all the Injunctions, or Appointments of Christ *according to the best of his Abilities*; for this would amount only to this *Identical* Proposition, that a sincere Christian *will be* a sincere Christian. And 3. There is another Reason to be given why this could not be his Meaning, *viz.* That his Lordship hath expressly specified the *Two Sacraments*, and *External Communion*, as of the Number of those *Appointments* of Christ, which he says, every sincere Subject of Christ will by his Regard to Christ be led to follow. Consequently therefore by *Appointments* his Lordship could not mean (as according to Mr. Pyle, he must be supposed to have meant) Such things as to a sincere Man, *appear to be* Appointments, but such as *really are* so, for *such* are the *Two Sacraments*, and *External Communion*. And there is no Sense, in saying that a sincere Christian will joyn *in the Use of the Sacraments*, according to the best of his Abilities; tho' it were Sense to say *in General*, that he will follow *all the Injunctions of Christ*, according to the best of his Abilities. For ought I can see therefore, Mr. Pyle must be contented to lay aside *the best of his Abilities*, and stand wholly to the other Interpretation, to wit, That a sincere Christian *may consistently* be led to

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all the Injunctions of Christ, *i. e.* as they are set down in the Gospel. This will be a *weighty* Proposition too ; but (which is as much as can be expected) it may be understood, that is, (*N. B.*) if you will give Mr. Pyle the liberty of making the Words, *Will*, and *May*, signify the same thing. But not to insist any longer upon this, I shall make one Observation more, which will effectually overthrow both these Interpretations at once, *viz.* 4. That the Nature of the Argument requires that his Lordship's Words be understood in that Sense which I have put upon them, and which Mr. Pyle rejects, *i. e.* as signifying, That all sincere Christians will be led to an uniform Reception of ALL the Doctrines, and appointed Means of Christ, as they were designed to be understood in the Gospel. For, pray observe. The Question between his Lordship and the Committee was, whether his Definition of the Church did not contradict the Definition given in the 19th Article. The Committee said it did, because the Article had made the Preaching of the Word, and the Administration of the Sacraments according to Christ's Appointment, essential to the Notion of the Church, which his Lordship's Definition had not. In Answer to this, his Lordship observes, 1. That according to him the Church consisted of those who are sincerely Subject to Jesus Christ, as their King and Lawgiver. 2. That all such Persons would be led by their Regard to Christ to follow all his Injunctions and Appointments, and consequently to joyn in the Worship of God with other Men, and partake of the Sacraments. If his Lordship did not hereby intend to shew, that the Preaching of the Word, and the Use of the Sacraments were, tho' not expressed in, yet implied under his Definition,

nition, I will venture to say, that he intended nothing but to impose upon his Readers. And if *he did* intend this, 'tis plain that when he says, that *all* the sincere Subjects of Jesus Christ will be led to follow *all* Jesus Christ's Injunctions, his Meaning must be, that they will *actually fulfil* whatever Jesus Christ has *Enjoyned, or Commanded* in the Gospel. For if it be only true, that such Persons *may consistently fulfil all* that is commanded in the Gospel, it will also be true, that *consistently* they *may not* do it. Or if it be only true, that such Persons *will, according to the best of their Abilities, fulfil all* that is commanded in the Gospel, it will also be true, that *for want of Abilities, they may possibly fail in many Particulars*. Neither of these Suppositions therefore will afford Foundation for any just Inference, that *all* sincere Subjects of Jesus Christ will be led to *joyn in the Publick Worship of God with other Men, and to the Use of the Sacraments*; and consequently upon neither of them will the *Preaching of the Word, and Administring the Sacraments*, be included under his Lordship's Definition.

It appears then in spite of all Mr. Pyle's Cavilling, that the Bishop *has supposed, and asserted*, that *all* Sincere Christians will be led to an *uniform Reception of ALL the Doctrines and Injunctions of the Gospel*. Not that this was his Lordship's real Opinion; no; but he said it merely because it was necessary to serve a present Purpose; and hereby he has given us such an Instance of disingenuous Dealing, as it were to be wished might be forgotten, and

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which therefore I am sorry that Mr. Pyle has given me this Occasion to repeat. The Case, as I have stated it in my *Remarks*, is plainly this, That if his Lordship had not asserted this, he must have said, that a Man *may be* a Member of HIS *Invisible Church*, tho' he be not a Member of the *Visible One*; i. e. he may be a *true Member of Christ's Church* (for *such*, I suppose, his Lordship conceives *all* the Members of HIS *Invisible Church* to be) and in consequence hereof entitled to *all* the Benefits and Privileges of the Gospel, tho' he partakes of *no Sacrament*, nor by any other Act becomes *joyned in Visible Communion* with other Christians. This Consequence Mr. Pyle owns, and justifies; for he says, that (b) *The Omission of no External Means can exclude a Man from Membership in the Invisible Church, if he be sincerely perswaded that the External Usages of [all] the Visible Communities he knows of are not Obligatory.* Frankly spoken indeed! But the Bishop foresaw, and has in effect confessed, that had he said thus much, he must at the same time have justified the Committee. *To make such Objections as these, says he, is to make Objections that have no Weight in them, UNLESS they who make them suppose, that by taking Christ for their King, Men WILL NOT be led to the Two Sacraments, and to the Use of his own Appointments.* What *these Objections* were, you have heard often enough; and you now hear his Lordship himself acknowledging in effect,

(b) Ibid. p. 23.

that if what he here mentions CAN BE *supposed*; these Objections will be of *Weight*. His Lordship then, I will venture to say, knows in his own Conscience that this *may be supposed*; he knows, or will not *deny* at least, that there are Multitudes of those who *take Christ for their King*, who are NOT led to the Two Sacraments; and his Doctrine about Sincerity, either labours under the Absurdity of providing against a Case that can never happen, or else it *must suppose*, that to *take Christ for ones King*, and yet NOT to follow all his Appointments, are very consistent things. His Lordship therefore is plainly *Self-condemned*; and as to Mr. Pyle, how *honest* a part soever he may have acted in thus freely declaring his Opinion, he has certainly acted a very *unfortunate* one, in granting *that* which, even in the Sense of the Bishop *himself*, leaves him open to the Justice of that Charge, against which he has spent so many Words in endeavouring to defend him.

What is the true Scriptural Notion of the Word CHURCH, as it was never a Point between his Lordship and the Committee, so I will take care it shall be none between Mr. Pyle and me. The Committee *supposed* that it was what the 19th Article made it to be, and I do think it will be by no means proper for me to enter into any Debate with that Gentleman, whether this Article be right, or whether it be wrong. To proceed therefore, The last Consequence charged by me upon his Lordship's Doctrine, is, that according to it the Religion of Jesus Christ in the largest Sense

of the Word, or as it takes in all those who believe in Jesus Christ, is of no greater Efficacy towards procuring God's Favour, than the Religion of Mahomet. This Consequence was mentioned by me; as added to those which had been drawn by the Committee; by which, says (c) Mr. Pyle, I suppose we are to understand it to be his own; tho', adds he, the Words show us he has done herein nothing but borrowed from Mr. Law; or (as he has it in the next Page, and elsewhere very frequently) HIS MASTER Law. If Mr. Pyle had intended this as a Compliment, I should have thanked him; but since I perceive 'tis designed as a Reflection upon the Master, and the Disciple both; I can only tell him that he has missed his End. I think it no Reproach to me, Sir, to be taught by Mr. Law; no, not even by yourself, when you'll be pleased to favour us with any thing that is worth the learning. But since I am thus called upon by Mr. Pyle, to give an Account where I had this Observation, I can tell him with a very safe Conscience, that I had it not from Mr. Law, whose Writings I had not before me to Copy after; tho' I must confess I had it from another Master, whom Mr. Pyle seems to hold in as great Contempt as he does Mr. Law; I mean common Sense, which without sending me to turn over what had been said by others upon this Subject, told me plainly, that if all Sincere Persons are in Vertue of their Sincerity

(c) Ibid. p. 26.

merely *alike Entitled to God's Favour*, it cannot possibly signify any thing as to God's Favour, provided a Man be but *Sincere*, whether he be a *Christian*, or whether he be a *Mahometan*. Now whereas Mr. Pyle mentions it as *something beneath me and my Recommenders too*, that I had rehearsed the *Argument without the least notice of any Answers given already to it*; (meaning, by himself, and some others, I know not who) I am in no manner of pain for this neither. For my *common Sense* also informed me that there was no occasion to trouble my self with these Answers; and Mr. Pyle has now fully satisfied me in what I always was apt to believe, *viz.* that these Answers, how *full and clear* soever they might appear to his Lordship's Advocates, were indeed nothing to the Purpose. To illustrate this Consequence which I had charged upon his Lordship's Doctrine, the more fully, I had produced that Argument which his Lordship had called a *Demonstration*, and shown that it was every whit as conclusive to justify *Mahometans* against *Christians*, as *Protestants* against *Papists*. How does Mr. Pyle answer this? How? Why, after his usual manner, so as to give up the very Point which the Argument was brought to prove! *No body denies*, says he, *but it* (the Argument) *will* (justify *Mahometans*, *Jews*, &c. against *Christians*) *in the true Sense of Sincerity and Justification*. Concerning the *true Sense of Sincerity*, we have no dispute: Now the *true Sense of Justification*, according to Mr. Pyle, you know is this; That all sincere Persons, without Exception shall, without any regard had

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to the Methods of Religion, which they have severally followed, be all *so far justified and accepted*, as to have *Rewards proportionable to their several Advancements, or Improvements in Virtuous Qualifications*. If this be true, then what I say is true, *viz.* That according to the Bishop, it signifies nothing as to a Man's Title to God's Favour, whether he be a *Christian*, or not a *Christian*; for if *all* depends upon the *Sincerity* of Men, and their *Virtuous Improvements*, 'tis plain that the *Method of Religion*, as such, can make no difference. Mr. Pyle therefore, if he pleases, may go on in saying, *It has been abundantly declared, that it neither was, nor possibly could be the meaning of his Lordship's Position to mount Mahometans, &c. to a Level in Degrees of future Rewards with Christians*. All I shall be able to infer from hence, will be, that when a thing is made out never so plainly, a Man may still continue to talk on, in hopes to confound his Readers by a multiplicity of words. And that this has been Mr. Pyle's true Intent and Meaning throughout this whole Debate, his Way, and Manner of Writing does, I think, too abundantly declare.

And now I am at last got through a piece of Work, the most tedious of any I ever yet undertook in my whole Life; and I question not but the Reader will agree with me, that if Mr. Pyle be so able a Writer as the Bishop has represented him, he never once met with a more willing one. I cannot but say, that I always thought this part of my Book to be of all others liable to the least exception; it
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consisting mainly of such plain Observations, as I thought no Man's common Sense could suffer him to differ with me about. So that when I found Mr. Pyle pursuing me so close, and endeavouring to trip up my Heels every Step I took, I began vehemently to suspect that something more than a Concern for the Truth must be at the bottom. And it seems I was not deceived ; for now at the close of all, the *Secret* drops out, and the meaning of all this *Worrying* is declared to be, (d) *That I may not complain for want of a Reply to any ONE THING upon this Head.* I do assure you, Sir, I should have complained *less* if you had replied to *fewer* ; and *less still*, if you had replied to *none at all* : But *the Bishop*, I suppose, would have complained, if you had failed of a Reply to *any one thing*, and therefore you were resolved to go on and justify him in *every thing*, whether there was a Reason for it, or whether there was none ! If Mr. Pyle did not mean to say thus much, his Conduct I am sure will justify *me* in saying it. And since this is the Case, he must not take it ill to be told, that for the future I shall pay no particular Regard to any thing that he may think fit to Publish against me. Once to do it, I thought it *Just* as well as *Decent* ; but as the Case stands, neither *Justice* nor *Decency* can require that I should do it *more than once*. If his Lordship is not now convinced that his Friend *deserves* no Notice, the World, I hope, is ; for certainly when once it appears that a Man will be *satisfied with no-*

(d) Ibid. p. 26, 27.

thing, it is acting a reasonable and a prudent part to give him nothing.

The Result of the whole is this. That according to the Account which Mr. Pyle himself has given us of the Bishop's Opinion, it must be true what I have laid to his Charge, That *provided a Man be but Sincere, it signifies nothing what Religion he is of.* For he tells us, that those who chuse *no* Communion, or a *bad* Communion; those who partake of the *Sacraments*, and those who partake of *no Sacraments*; those who are *Christians*, and those who are *no Christians*, if they are but *Sincere*, are all of them *equally justified*, i. e. they are *in this Sense* equally justified, that the diversity of Religions, or Ways of Worship which they have followed, will not hinder them from being *all* of them *Entitled to Rewards proportionate to their Moral Improvements.* This is all that ever I charged upon his Lordship; for tho' I observed (p. 22. of my *Remarks*) that his Lordship's Principle as he hath stated it, left no room for God in dispensing his Favours in a Life to come, to make any difference between one Man and another upon the Account of their *Moral Qualifications*; yet I never made that Point any part of the Debate, but laying it aside as that which I presumed his Lordship never intended to meddle with, confined my self all along to this single Question, *viz. Whether all Sincere Persons are Entitled to an equal Share of God's Favour, notwithstanding any Difference that there is between them, with respect to the particular Method of Religion, which they each of them severally followed.*

lowed. The Method of Religion *as such*, was the thing concerning which the Inquiry was, whether it makes a difference or not; Mr. Pyle you see, says it makes *no* difference, and he says true, if it be true that *Sincerity* is the ONLY *Condition* required in the Gospel, in order to give us a *Title* to the *Rewards* of the Gospel. For upon this Supposition an Honest *Heathen* has as good a *Title* to the Favour of God as an Honest *Christian*; and he who lives according to the Gospel, shall have *no better claim* to its *Promises* than he who *Subverts* the *Faith* and *Practice* of the Gospel. Once more then I ask, is *Sincerity* the ONLY *Condition* of the Gospel, or is it not? Mr. Pyle (e) says *it is*; but instead of proving it, puts us off with a Promise that he intends to prove it, *whensoever I shall make it necessary for him to do so*; though at the same time he very well knew that I had *already* made it necessary, and left the whole of the Debate to depend upon this Issue. What might be the occasion of this Backwardness in Mr. Pyle, he best knows, tho' I think 'tis no hard matter to guess; but forasmuch as he has not thought fit to say any to this Point, 'tis unreasonable *in him* to expect that I should. I have already declared my Opinion on the other side, and if any thing be wanting to support it, it shall be considered in the Defence of the *third* part of my *Remarks*, which (unless his Lordship by any future Declarations of his Meaning shall make it unnecessary) I intend shortly to publish in a distinct Treatise.

One thing I have now to ask of his Lordship, namely, That he would be pleased to deduct one out of that *Heap* of *Contradictions* and *In-*

(e) Ibid. p. 36.

consistencies, which HE has thought fit to lay upon the Reverend the Dean of Chichester. The Dean had declared, that a *Perswasion of Errors and Corruptions in the Establish'd Church will EXCUSE a Separation from it.* Now *this*, says (f) the Bishop, *is that very Doctrine of SINCERITY which was Censured by the Dean, and his Brethren of the Committee, &c.* But it is manifest that a Man may be excused in a Separation from the Established Church, *i. e.* released from any Obligation to Communicate with the Established Church, without being justified, *i. e.* without having any Claim to God's Promises by the New Covenant. He may be acquitted of the Penalties of the Gospel, and yet not Entitled to the Rewards of the Gospel. That this is what the Dean meant by justifying, is too notorious to be denied; and therefore upon this Foot, as HE will be made to speak consistently with himself; so I may hope to avoid another Charge, which indeed equally affects us both, *viz.* the permitting a Preface to be prefixed to my Book, in which the Dean grossly contradicts and ridicules the Principles of that very Treatise he professes to recommend. The Doctrine which the Dean opposes in this Preface, is this, That Sincerity Entitles Men to God's FAVOUR, *i. e.* (as he has explained himself) THAT Favour which he has Published, Declared, and promised to Mankind thro' the Means provided in the Gospel; contradistinguished to THAT Goodness and Mercy of God, which, for ought we know, he may extend beyond the Limits of the Gospel. The Doctrine contained in my Treatise, is, That nothing but Performance of the CONDITIONS of the Gospel will Entitle Men to the REWARDS of the Gospel, tho' they

(f) Common Rights of Subjects Defended, &c. p. 115 117.

may be sure of a GOOD Reward, i. e. of a State of Happiness hereafter. When the Bishop can show that these two Doctrines are *Contradictory*, he will at the same time shew that the *Dean* hath contradicted *me*, and not before. Tho', were he able to do it, why he should insinuate that my PERMITTING (as he is pleased to speak) this *Preface* to be prefix'd to my Book, is an Argument of *Disingenuity* in me; I do not understand. His Lordship has of late been a great dealer in *Prefaces* and *Postscripts*. Mr. *Pilloniere*, and Mr. *Sykes*, are both his Debtors on that Score. Whether when his Lordship tender'd them this *Honour*, either of them demanded a Sight of his Papers before they were Published, lest afterwards they should find themselves *Ridicul'd*, is best known to themselves. But if they did, as his Lordship on the one hand shew'd an uncommon Generosity to one of them, whose Book (if I remember rightly) he usher'd into the World, tho' as he afterwards declared he had *never once read it*; so they on the other hand did not shew that Regard to his Lordship's good *Sense*, which ENVY *her self* will not be able to say, I ought not to have paid to the *Dean's*.

To Conclude, if his Lordship's Doctrine be as I have here represented it, he must not pretend to say that I have not *differed from him one Hair's breadth*. For that all Sincere Persons are Entitled to the Rewards of the Gospel; and that all Sincere Persons are *not* Entitled to the Rewards of the Gospel; that Sincerity is the only Condition, or that Sincerity is *not* the only Condition of the New Covenant, are Propositions as diametrically opposite the one to the other, as Light is to Darkness; and consequently, if his Lordship maintains the *former*, it can-

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not truly be pretended that I have not *contradicted* him, by maintaining the *latter*. But if his Lordship shall renounce this Doctrine, and declare plainly that he intended only to say, that no Persons who have used their constant Endeavours to please God, shall be *condemned*; tho' he will never be able to perswade me, that his Words imply no more, yet I shall rejoyce in this Happy Agreement with him in the Truth; and shall think my self disengaged from all Obligation to proceed any farther in this Controversy. The Dispute then will lie, not between his Lordship and *me*, but between his Lordship and *his Friends*, whom he has deceived into a wrong Opinion; and I shall think it but just, that he who was the Instrument of *giving* the *Scandal*, should also be the Instrument of *removing* it.

F I N I S.

